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THE MINISTER IN THE ITINERANT SYSTEM

THE MINISTER
IN THE
ITINERANT SYSTEM

BY

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OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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PREFACE

AMONG the practical problems the Christian Church has had to consider has been the best way to secure ministers for churches and churches for ministers.

Looking over Christendom at large, or limiting the view merely to the United States of America, one is impressed by the fact that a large number of ministers are without churches and that many churches are without pastors.

Hence, one of the pressing questions is: How shall the idle preachers be given employment, and how shall all the vacant pulpits be supplied and kept supplied with ministers, and, further, how can this be done in the most prompt and effective way?

In some denominations the church itself must secure its own pastor and the minister himself must find his own place; but, with this liberty, there continue to be very many vacant churches and a large number of unemployed ministers.

In other denominations there is a power above the local church and the individual

preacher to which the church and the minister must look in the matter of effecting or dissolving a pastoral relation.

Another method is to have the minister assigned and moved by a central authority, with pastoral adjustments presumably for a year at a time, but which may be continued from year to year indefinitely or up to a certain limit, as the law of the denomination may provide.

This is the itinerant appointive system of pastoral supply and change which is in use in many denominations and in many different countries.

It is found in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Great Britain and the various Methodistic churches elsewhere in the British Empire. In the United States of America it is found in the Methodist Episcopal Church; in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; in the other Methodist Episcopal Churches, white and coloured; in the Methodist Protestant Church; in the United Brethren Churches; in the Evangelical Association; in the United Evangelical Church; and in various bodies too numerous to mention in this Preface, some of which bear and some of which do not bear the Methodistic title.

In this system are about fifty thousand itinerant preachers, and under this system are

eight to nine millions of communicant members, and about twenty-four millions of adherents more or less closely attached to the different denominations having the appointive system. Thus it is wide-spread and in many lands, and also has been thoroughly tested in many parts of the world and among diverse peoples during a long period of time, which may in round numbers be called one hundred and seventy-five years.

All these classes—ministers, members, and adherents—are very directly concerned in this system and in its proper working, and should study existing conditions and consider the possible or probable outcome of certain tendencies if they are continued.

This book is a brief study of the itinerant appointive system of pastoral supply, and, particularly, of the minister in the system—how it affects him and how it should be affected by him,—and also the relation of the layman and the local churches to this system.

What is said in these pages elucidating the system and pointing out its tendencies and needs, has an equal application to the ministry and membership of all denominations that use the system in any form, and the book is intended for all, though here and there some readers may need to substitute a few phrases and technical titles, because the titles of au-

thority in different bodies vary, while the functions are essentially the same.

The basis of this work was a paper by the author read before the Methodist Episcopal Preachers' Meeting of New York City and vicinity. After the delivery of the address, the meeting unanimously requested its publication that it might be circulated among laymen as well as preachers. The matter is now offered to the public in the hope that it may help both preachers and people in the various bodies using this system, and also those who use some other method.

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Philadelphia, Pa.

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I

THE MINISTER

CORRECT definitions are fundamental in any discussion and should be presented and agreed upon at the very beginning in order to prevent misunderstandings in the progress of the consideration.

So even in such a matter as the one now to occupy our attention, there are a few which at the beginning are essential for a clear understanding and a definite discussion of the subject.

A consideration of "The Minister in the Itinerant System" raises two primary questions:

First, What are we to understand by "The Minister", and, *second,* What are we to understand by "The Itinerant System"?

First, then, as to the Minister. The title of course means the Minister of the Gospel, but it has a specially related meaning.

In the olden time, particularly in bodies having the itinerant system, a distinction was made between a mere preacher and a minister.

A minister, it is true, was a preacher of the

Gospel, but all preachers were not ministers in the technical and comprehensive sense.

A minister in this sense was a preacher who was a member of an Annual Conference, and, therefore, a preacher who had the privileges and responsibilities of such membership, and, so, one might be a preacher but, in this sense, not be a minister.

The same distinction is made to-day, as is seen in the fact that a preacher may be a local preacher, and, not being a member of an Annual Conference, he is not classed as a minister, and, strictly speaking, he is not in the itinerancy, or, to use a venerable phrase, he is not a "travelling preacher."

Thus the word preacher is rather too broad, for one might preach and yet not be a minister in the technical sense as used in an itinerant ecclesiasticism. The minister, then, is what some churches call a clergyman.

In this discussion of the minister, therefore, we do not intend to include in the title all preachers, and, more than that, we do not intend to include in the title all who in some sense belong to the ministerial ranks, or even all who are members of an Annual Conference.

For the purpose in hand we would eliminate bishops and other general officers of the Church, such as editors, secretaries, and publishing agents. For the time being we would

omit also presiding elders, or district superintendents and presidents of, and professors in institutions of learning, though they may have some ministerial rank. To differentiate still more precisely, we propose to limit our discussion to "the ministers" in the ordinary, or more restricted sense: namely, to the ministers in the local churches, who are commonly called pastors.

By the title minister there will be understood, therefore, the preacher who is connected with an Annual Conference, who is subject to pastoral assignment, and who takes appointments to pastoral charges. He is the pastor whose general work is preaching, and who, under an appointing authority, is assigned to the care and management of a particular pastoral charge.

He is more than a mere preacher and more than a mere pastor, and, so, in view of his double function, he may be called the preacher-pastor, or the pastor-preacher.

II

THE MINISTER'S WORK

JUST a suggestive word as to the function of the minister. In general terms, the minister's work is, first, that of a teacher, and, secondly, that of a shepherd.

The minister preaches and so promulgates Christ's truth, and by his preaching not only diffuses information, but also, as he preaches for a direct and immediate moral purpose and religious result, he produces conviction, first, as to the truth taught; second, as to sin and holiness; and, third, as to the hearer's duty; and, thus, brings about spiritual conversions, and, then, having secured the soul's decision, he protects and preserves the results of his preaching by caring for the converts.

He edifies the believer by building up character upon the firm foundations of Christian truth, he guides the convert and directs him in right paths, he feeds the lambs, and protects the flock of Christ as a whole, and at the same time provides for each individual therein.

The minister, first, is a preacher. As a

preacher he is a proclaimer of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He is a teacher, presenting the truth to each one according to condition and capacity. He is an expounder of the truth, intelligently unfolding and applying its meaning. He is a speaker, presenting to his hearers the living truth by a living voice from a living soul.

The minister, secondly, is a pastor. Having instructed his hearers, having impressed them, and having persuaded them to make a beginning in the Christian life, it is now his duty to care for them, to strengthen the good that is in them, to defend them from temptation and sin, and to cultivate their Christian character. This also involves the training of the member of Christ's Church so as to strengthen him in the faith, and to enable him to help others. These and other related efforts become the duty of the minister as the pastor or shepherd of the flock.

The minister is also an administrator. He is the head of the church and, in a sense, is to manage the church organization. He is both a leader and an executive, and is to make and execute plans for the advancement of the interests of the church. Further, he has a legal responsibility and is to maintain and to secure observance of the laws of the denomination both by individuals and by the whole

body ecclesiastic. In doing all these things he is to administer as for the Lord and for the people and not for his own individual interest. The minister himself is a man under authority and subject to rules and regulations.

There are church officers over him to whom he owes at least official respect and obedience and ordinarily a degree of real affection. There is the Presiding Elder, or District Superintendent, or equivalent officer immediately over him. Higher up is the Bishop, or President, who is clothed with more authority in order to secure thorough supervision and efficiency, but, with greater power, he is expected to exercise his authority from a brother's heart.

The minister is to recognize his superior officers and to render obedience to their legal authority, but he should never be called upon to do this to the sacrifice of his own manhood.

While the minister is a man under authority, he is also a man of authority. As such he is to exercise authority over others. He is to execute the laws of the Church as they touch his jurisdiction. He is to see that the law is not disregarded, much less despised, or violated with impunity by those who should render obedience.

Under the pastor are officials of the local

church and private members whom he is to direct, and, it may be, command, though when that is his duty, it is to be done with a kindly spirit.

Consequently, being a man in authority, he should carry himself with a quiet and dignified consciousness, as a man of authority who feels he is bearing grave responsibilities, and the people should expect in him such a demeanour.

The minister should be a brother beloved—a brother to the more mature and a father to the young—and the brotherly spirit should always predominate, whether the minister acts as preacher, as pastor, or as the manager of the church and its members, or in any other capacity.

To be a preacher-pastor is to have a noble work, for the work tends to make men noble, and, hence, the minister who does this work also ennobles himself and ranks as one of God's noblemen.

The work of the Christian ministry is a divine calling and draws on and develops the best elements in the nature of the minister, and the effort he makes for others comes back in greatest satisfaction and strength to the soul of the faithful preacher-pastor and he finds that his effort brings its own reward.

In all the activities of the wide world there is no work equal to it and the ministry is the

most honourable position that can be occupied by a mortal man.

Other callings have their compensations, and their pleasures, but they have their drawbacks also, and, frequently, the pleasures do not more than balance the drawbacks, but, with all its difficulties, the pastorate gives real pleasure to the devoted minister.

Given certain conditions, for example, a loyal and loving people, a Christly membership, a co-working body, a successful church, a strong church numerically and able to carry itself financially without a severe strain, or a young and growing church in a growing community, and there is no position in this world that brings so much genuine happiness as the pastorate.

Even when all these model conditions do not exist, but where there is difficulty and struggle and all in the church are not saints, even then, when personal reward in the conscience is considered, and the delight of seizing an opportunity to do good and achieving in spite of opposition, and, particularly, the winning of souls from sin in a sinful world, there is no preferable or equal position and none that gives such pure satisfaction and fills the heart with such lasting joy.

III

ABANDONING THE PASTORATE

NOTWITHSTANDING the nobility and soul-satisfying nature of the Christian pastorate, nevertheless one of the greatest evils in the Church at the present time is the temptation and the effort on the part of ministers to get out of the pastorate and into some office, or into some other kind of work, which, perhaps, is largely, or mainly, of a secular character, and the evil is aggravated when there is political working to secure the official place, or unseemly effort to obtain the secular or semi-secular position.

It portends evil to the Church when men are so anxious to escape from the pastorate, and when, as soon as one General Conference is over, men begin to plan and work to get an office at the next General Conference, and when at a General Conference a considerable proportion of the time is given over to pure—or, as some would say, impure—politics.

Certainly it must seem impossible for one to do faithful work as a pastor when his am-

bition and effort to get out of the pastorate and to get into an office are absorbing his thought, his time, and his energy.

We should ask why so many pastors are so anxious to leave the pastorate. Why do ministers want to leave the pastorate and seek office, or be elected to office, whether it be large or small?

Of course, the Church must have offices and must have officers to fill them, but the Church itself at the right time should seek, find, and take the right man for the office and not the man seek the place, and then the man should be selected because his fitness has been demonstrated by his faithful and efficient service in some other sphere. Then it ought not to be true, and it must not be true, that only the minister holding official position in the Church is to be regarded as a man of any moment, for nothing should dwarf the pastorate, and of all men the pastor should not permit his position to be discounted.

Officers are necessary and officials are important, but the pastor has a most honourable position, and, indeed, is the most important of all, and, consequently, for ministers to be filled with an inordinate desire to secure some other position, official or otherwise, means disaster to the Church and imminent injury to the man's own spiritual welfare.

Then, why do ministers desire to desert the pastorate and seek some other position? Or, why do they not prosecute their pastoral work and let the place seek them?

There must be some explanation for the exodus from the pastorate which is so evident in many directions. The Church should find it and at once correct this unfortunate tendency.

Why, then, do so many desire to leave the pastorate?

Do they dislike the work of the pastor-preacher? If they dislike that work, are they likely to put their heart into the other official work with its taxing routine? If they have acquired a distaste for the pastorate, is it because of the essential nature of its duties or is it because of unessential and unpleasant conditions which in recent years have settled about and cling to the position like noxious vines which create a poisonous atmosphere and prevent freedom of action?

Is it because certain persons in the church do not appreciate them? Is that a sufficient reason for the change of activity? If some do not appreciate them as pastors, then they may not be appreciated by every one when they get some official or other position, especially when disappointed persons imagine that the officer can and should give them what he

does not possess, or does not have in his power to give.

Are they ill-treated by the local church they serve? If so, are they sure they will receive any better treatment from the new constituency they will find associated with their new form of work? Every position is likely to have its own difficulties.

Is it because they do not like to be voted upon each year by a Quarterly Conference or some other official body? If this is the reason, or a reason, then it should be clearly understood that in the system there is no law for such voting. Indeed, such votes, being quasi-elections, are not presumed or permitted by the law. In the itinerant system pastoral designations are not settled by popular elections of any form, but by a legally constituted appointing power.

Is it because of financial reasons? Will the salary be larger? But a minister is to be controlled by something higher than money considerations. Perhaps the local church ought to do better financially, or perhaps it is doing its best, and many a time pastors have refused to leave for the higher salary because of a conscientious feeling that they could do more good by remaining where they were.

If it is a question of salary, it may be said to-day that an able preacher does not need to

get into office for financial reasons, for some strong churches pay as much as, or more than, bishops, editors, or general secretaries receive, not counting the perquisities given to the pastors of such churches which stand out against the few or no perquisites of the official position.

Then it does not follow that because a minister is a good preacher, or even a good platform speaker, he will make a good executive officer; and it does not follow that because a pastor can wisely manage a local charge he could successfully administer the general affairs of the entire denomination; and, further, it may be said that one who dislikes details and routine in the pastorate is not likely to succeed in the discharge of official duty which, probably, involves many more details, both of a major and a minor character.

It should also be observed that, as to home-life and comfort, the average pastor has greatly the advantage of the itinerant official.

Yet in spite of all these things, and notwithstanding the nobility of the pastoral relation, is it not too often true that among ministers there is a feverish anxiety to get out of the pastorate?

As a result, men who would make great pastors and who could build up great churches are leaving their pastoral charges and going into

little, and, it may be, semi-secular offices, and then, though they have only a petty office, lo! they are regarded as somehow somewhat superior to the faithful pastor who is winning men to righteousness, saving souls, and building for eternity.

Such an undue depletion of the pastoral ranks is an unwholesome tendency. It weakens the Church where it should be specially strong, and where, if it is not strong, every department of the Church must seriously suffer.

The power of the ministry is mainly in the pastorate, and that department should be kept well supplied and full of vigour, and especially at the present time is there great need for strong men in the pulpit and in the pastorate.

Even with the tendency away from the pastorate, it would be a sad mistake to suppose that all the mighty ministers are in the offices, and that only the weak ones remain as pastors of churches.

As a matter of fact, it is not true, for many of the very best ministers remain in the pastorate and prefer its activities and opportunities, though some churches fail to recognize and acknowledge the great ability of their pastors until they are translated to another sphere in this world or the next.

We repeat that the strongest class of ministers are greatly needed in the pastorate, and at the present moment the greatest possible emphasis should be placed upon the pastorate, for it is the most honourable place for the minister in the economy of the Christian Church.

Still, the question returns: Why is there such eagerness to escape from the pastorate and secure some ecclesiastical office, or even to engage in secular employment?

The Church should find the reason and apply the remedy.

Is it because of the difficulties connected with pastoral work in these modern times? If so, we may say to the minister that he will find difficulties connected with official position, and we may tell him that no position in this life is free from difficulties. But that is not enough to say.

Why is it that there is such a tendency to be relieved from the pastorate? Is it to get away from its troubles? Then it may be said that the minister is quite certain to get into other forms of trouble, and, possibly, worse ones, no matter where he goes, and that he is simply flying from troubles with which he is familiar to certain troubles he knows not of.

But to say that is not sufficient. The repulsion from, the attraction by something else,

and the impulsion away from the pastorate and toward the something else continue, and it may be, with increasing force.

If the minister says it is because of the uncertainty of the pastorate—its uncertain tenure and uncertain support—we may answer that other positions have their uncertainties, but, nevertheless, the facts remain, and, as long as he feels the influence of existing facts, he is likely to feel their repellent force and to be in danger of being swept away by their centrifugal power.

The Church must do more than tell the preachers that there are imperfections elsewhere and everywhere. The Church must inquire into existing conditions. Are there evils connected with the pastorate? If there are evil, or uncomfortable, conditions, then it must be asked whether they are inherent or accidental. If they are accidental or unnecessary, then they may be remedied. Even if they are chronic, but not essentially permanent, the Church may change the unpleasant conditions, and if it can improve these conditions, it is its duty to begin to do so at the earliest possible moment.

Notwithstanding the loftiness of a pastor's relation to his people and the soul-satisfying character of his toil, it must be admitted that the pastorate has its drawbacks, not because

of the essential nature of pastoral work, but because of certain conditions which are not due to the man or his work, but to those with whom he deals or who deal with him.

There are difficulties that exist even under the fairest conditions. The financial support may sometimes be unsatisfactory where neither people nor preacher are to blame, and we may sagely comfort the preacher by saying that there are financial difficulties in other spheres. So we may say that anywhere and everywhere the future has uncertainty, that every field of action has its difficulties and hardships, and that unpleasant persons may be found everywhere in this world and that we may be compelled to come into touch with them.

These well-intended consolations, however, do not cover all the facts. For example, there is irregular and uncertain financial support where the people are abundantly able to pay the preacher a good salary and to pay it at regular intervals, but they are indifferent to the comfort of the pastor. Such treatment humiliates a self-respecting pastor and tends to alienate him from the pastoral relation.

There is a degree of uncertainty as to future pastoral assignments which is a strain on a sensitive nature, but this may be aggravated by the interference of persons who have

no legal part in the matter of making appointments.

In the local church, where every one should know his place under the law, the pastor may be made miserable by the unpleasant assertiveness of some member, or by the attempted domination of the minister by individuals who seek to control the church, and who expect the pastor to humbly conform to their commands and yield to their dictation, and who express or imply a threat that if he does not yield they will defeat him in his work and cause his removal from the charge. Usually it is a covert threat, but that is as effective as if it were outspoken.

All these and other unnecessary evils exist here and there and make the lot of many a minister exceedingly hard.

Such evils are found in some degree in too many places, and they are entirely unnecessary, but pastors experience them so often that in course of time they regard them as practically inevitable, and as evils which they must always meet as long as they remain in the pastorate, and this supposed fact drives many a minister out of the pastoral relation.

Some, indeed, who criticize ministers for leaving the pastorate, or abandoning the itinerancy, should ask themselves whether they personally are not at least partially responsi-

ble for the exodus. Perhaps they make the pastor's path rough and rocky. Perhaps they do not contribute their share to the finances and see to it that the pastor's salary is paid with regularity, and, perhaps, by their conduct and conversation they make it difficult for the minister to remain in the charge or to get the kind of charge he deserves. Such persons may be responsible for driving a minister out of the pastorate.

Lay officials particularly should consider whether there is not some responsibility resting upon the people in this matter, and inquire whether there is not something they can do to reduce the friction and to diminish the unnecessary burden the average pastor has been compelled to carry.

Most assuredly it is to the interest of the Church to reduce the hardships of the pastorate as far as possible and to make the life of the pastor as delightful and encouraging as it can and should be made.

It is the duty of the Church and of each individual member thereof to correct the avoidable evil conditions that are driving ministers out of the pastorate or are breaking their spirit and destroying their efficiency.

IV

THE SYSTEM

THE minister is in a system and is a part of the system. This system we should now consider, and here again we need a definition.

What is a system?

A system is an orderly plan of operation, settled by some competent authority; an arrangement of actions so adjusted as to work together, and to work out some desired and practical result.

The *Century Dictionary* says a system is, "Any combination or assemblage of things adjusted as a regular and connected whole."

Butler, in his *Analogy,* states that: "Every work, both of nature and art, is a system; and, as every particular thing, both natural and artificial, is for some use or purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add to what has already been brought into the idea of a system its conduciveness to this one or more ends."

A Church organization is an ecclesiastical

system formed for the purpose of working out certain results particularly of a moral or religious character, and the different ecclesiastical systems vary according to the difference in the end sought and the method employed to attain that end.

Within the general organization of a Church there may be a subordinate system harmonizing with the ecclesiasticism as a whole, but working in its own peculiar way to the attainment of some particular result.

Thus denominations have different methods for adjusting the relations between ministers and churches. With some the selection of a pastor is left entirely to the local church, with others there is a general body, like a presbytery, with intervening and confirmatory power, while with others there are authorities like a bishop or president, or committee with power of pastoral assignment.

So some denominations have a settled pastorate, with the ministers installed for life or for an indefinite period supposed to continue at least for a considerable number of years, while others have a distinctively movable pastorate which may or may not be for a given number of years.

These varying systems have the common purpose of keeping churches supplied with pastors, but differ as to the power that makes

the adjustment between the pastor and the church, and also as to the period the minister may continue in the pastoral relation to a particular church.

So in contradistinction to the "settled" pastorate, which, however, may be, and frequently is, unsettled, there is what is termed the itinerant system.

Under this system the pastor is not settled permanently in a given charge, but is movable and must move from one charge to another at the end of a given period or at the will of an appointing power, which appointing power may be a bishop, a president, or a stationing committee, or it may be a Conference, and this appointing power assigns the minister to the charge and moves him to another according to its own judgment.

This is the essence of the itinerant system, and the ministers in it have been called itinerant or travelling preachers.

This itinerancy, or itinerant system, is found throughout the Wesleyan and Methodistic bodies. Thus it is found in the Wesleyan Church and other Methodistic bodies in Great Britain, in the British Colonies, and in other parts of the world.

In the United States of America it is found in the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the

Methodist Protestant Church, in other bodies bearing the Methodist Episcopal title, in the United Brethren Churches, in the Evangelical Association, in the United Evangelical Church, and in kindred bodies.

While there are some variations in the different Methodistic bodies, the ecclesiastical system of church government, management, and action in the Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest body in the United States, may be taken as a general type for all the Churches with an itinerant ministry.

The Church has such a system with plans or methods which involve certain mutual relations between the parties included in the Church, all of whom have a relation to particular forms of practical activity, and, especially, the matter of pastoral supply or ministerial assignment to designated churches or pastoral charges.

It is the system with which, in a special sense, the minister is related and of which he is the vital part, but to which others also are related. Under this system are found all who are in the Church:

First, the members and probationers in the local churches, and, in a less rigid relation, the congregation of attendants, or non-members, who are more or less regular in their attendance on the church services;

Second, the ministers who hold their membership in the Annual Conferences; and,

Third, the bishops of the Church, or equivalent officers with appointive power.

In other words, there are in this system the two great classes—the ministry and the laity, —but the parties most directly and peculiarly affected by it are the pastors.

The preacher-pastor is the fundamental factor, the primary and most important force, and the one indispensable personage in the Church.

It would be possible, indeed, for a Church to do without presiding elders or district superintendents, and even without bishops and other officers. Indeed, denominations have existed without such officers as bishops and presiding elders, but no Church can do without pastors.

Nevertheless, a religious denomination is the better for such supervising officers, for they insure breadth of ecclesiastical vision, they bind together and tend to unity in the body ecclesiastic, they stimulate the various powers of the denomination, and bring about a combination and concentration of denominational force that makes for the greatest efficiency in the general body, and this, by reflex action, results in turn in greater effectiveness in the individual church.

But, after all is said on this side, the pastor remains the absolutely necessary factor, and the dignity and importance of the pastor's work must be emphasized, for it is most important and is absolutely indispensable. Happy is the pastor who realizes it, and fortunate and wise is the church by whom it is most fully recognized!

A Church without pastors is abnormal, but a minister without a church may go out and gather a congregation and make a church.

The Church must have pastors, for without pastors the Church must fail, disintegrate, and pass away.

The minister is in this itinerant system and he is its most important factor, for without him we would not and could not have the system at all.

Generally speaking, the minister was in the system as a layman before he became a minister in the Annual Conference, and, when he became a minister by entering the ranks of the Annual Conference membership, he voluntarily put himself into this system of pastoral assignment.

This particular itinerant system of which we treat is essentially a system of pastoral assignment in which the minister is the most vital element, but he is not the only party to the system. There are others who are equally

committed to it, the parties in and to this system being, on the one hand, the minister, and, on the other hand, the lay member; or, in other words, the parties to the system are the ministry and the lay membership, which means the entire Church.

To recapitulate: There is the general ecclesiastical system, including the ministry and the laity, or the entire Church, with its ministers, its local churches, and all its mechanism, a part of which is the itinerant system, with a movable ministry which is for all and covers all, the adjustment of the travelling preachers to the local charges being made by an appointive authority, or an appointing power, the assignment of the pastor resting finally in the decision of the bishop or an equivalent executive.

This is the itinerant system in which are the ministers and of which they are the vital part.

V

WHAT THE SYSTEM EXPECTS

THIS itinerant system necessarily requires certain things from the parties in the system and who are to be benefited by it, and these demands are not arbitrary, but are absolutely necessary to its fair operation, and, indeed, to its actual existence.

So we should consider what the system asks and expects from the parties who are under it and are to receive benefits from it.

First, from the minister it requires that he shall receive his appointment; that he shall go to the pastoral charge to which he is assigned; that he shall do faithful work therein; and that he shall stay in that charge until he is duly removed by the proper authority.

It is plain that such obedience is necessary, for without it the system could not work and would cease to be.

Second, from the laity the system expects and requires that the church shall receive the duly appointed pastor; that it will receive him cordially; that it will sustain and coöperate with him in his church work; and that it will

support him financially by giving the pastor a comfortable living according to its ability.

This acquiescence on the part of the lay membership is likewise absolutely necessary to enable the system to do its work and continue its existence.

These demands of the system are compatible with the freedom of the minister and the layman, for the system exists because the ministers and the laymen have entered into it voluntarily and not by compulsion.

Each lay member has freely accepted and agreed to support and abide by the system which provides the charge with a pastor, and each minister has just as freely accepted and agreed to support and abide by the system which determines where he shall perform his ministerial and pastoral work.

In neither case was either party forced to come under the system.

The fundamental and common agreement which forms the basis of this system is a mutual one, which exists for the good of all, that considers all, and that protects and favours all parties to the contract, both clergy and laity.

This system of pastoral assignment is one in which the minister gives up his natural right of choice of place, so that it is not for him to decide where he will labour, while, on the other hand, the people give up their natu-

ral right of choice of the pastor who shall minister to them, and both preachers and churches agree to submit their respective cases —their needs and desires—to the judgment of an appointing power: namely, the bishop presiding over the Conference in which the pastoral charge is located or to some equivalent authority in bodies that do not have bishops.

This, however, does not preclude or prohibit the right of presentation of desire or preference by either party. This is a privilege conceded to both preachers and people, if they care to avail themselves of it.

As to the assignment itself, the system supposes and declares that this is not made by the minister himself or by the charge itself, or by both together, but both clergy and laity agree to loyally abide by the decision of the bishop, or the appointing power, whose constitutional duty it is to "fix the appointments of the preachers."

In reaching his decision it is not to be assumed that the bishop trusts simply to his own knowledge and acts without regard to light which others can shed upon the situation. On the contrary, the bishop seeks the facts that are calculated to give him the right view of each case. He has official advisers and he can, and does, secure information from the presiding elders or district superintendents, forming

what is commonly called the "Bishop's cabinet," and beyond that he can, and does, obtain information from ministers and laymen, and may, indeed, from all parties who can give him light in any way and in any degree. So the probabilities are that before the appointments are really made the bishop has become the best informed person on the ground.

The experience of the world has led to the judgment that the final decision of one well-informed man, who is charged with responsibility for which he is accountable, is as reliable as the vote of a committee, and, frequently, more desirable as well as more reliable in executive lines.

In a committee—even in a small one—there may be conflicting interests and a shifting of responsibility from one to another, so that it cannot easily be located, while the single individual must bear his own burden and be responsible at least to public opinion.

As a result of this general consensus of opinion decisions as to appointments of individuals to positions of action have been left to the general, the judge, the governor, the president, thus placing the responsibility upon one person. This means concentrated responsibility, but it has been found to be more certain and effective than divided or dispersed responsibility.

But, as has been seen, the bishop is not left alone in his work. He has advisers, and often many of them. We will not say too many, though one might think there were too many when they want to dictate, rather than advise or give information.

It will not be affirmed that the bishop's judgment, or the judgment of the appointing power, is always absolutely perfect, but it is at least presumably equal to that of any other man, or small number of men, and probably superior to that of directly interested parties, whether lay or ministerial. That the informed bishop is more, or entirely, disinterested, strengthens the supposition that his decision will be fair and not biased by prejudice or his own personal advantage.

Even a minister left to his own resources is not as likely, under the same or similar circumstances, to do as well for himself as a bishop could and would do for him.

So a local church, or a lay committee, if left to itself to secure a pastor, cannot do better, or as well, for itself, as the appointing power which has a broader and more accurate knowledge of the body of preachers. That has been demonstrated over and over again, as many lay officials will readily admit.

Where it is a question of adjustment between many ministers and many churches, it

is manifestly in the interest of equity and wise distribution to have an appointing power that is disinterested and has a wide general and particular knowledge of preachers and places.

What is needed is the observance of sound and uniform principles of adjustment by all administrators, so that under the same conditions the same right thing would always be done. This would give a fixed policy and establish confidence on the part of preachers and people.

If there be objection to an individual bishop as not competent or as partial, then it is to be said that no one should be elected to, or selected for, an administrative office who cannot be entrusted with executive authority, but once he is elected, he should be expected and trusted to discharge his administrative obligations as the law directs. If he does not obey the law, or is guilty of maladministration, he can be called to account in a legal manner, where he shall hear specific allegations, come face to face with the complainants, and have abundant opportunity to make answer.

The system presupposes that the presiding elder, or district superintendent, or other person, who appears to represent preachers and pastoral charges, will have no selfish, political, prejudiced, or partial motive in his supervision, or in his suggestions as to the appoint-

ment of preachers, and certainly no purpose to promote his own personal ambitions, if he should chance to have any.

Likewise, the system supposes that the bishop shall have no personal motive, no favoritism, no political bias, or any such thing, but that he will administer solely for the good of the work, without fear of individuals and without any purpose of winning their favour, but with sincere regard for the rights of all, and for the welfare of the entire Church.

In other words, the system supposes intelligent and courageous impartiality in its administration.

With these presuppositions on behalf of the itinerant system of ministerial appointment the Church expects cordial acquiescence on the part of all, whether preachers or people, in its legal working, and particularly because it is the law of the Church to which all in the Church have subscribed.

VI

WHAT THE SYSTEM PROMISES

THE system not only demands certain things from the parties concerned, but, on the other hand, it makes certain pledges to those who are under it. While the system insists upon and expects most loyal submission to the requirements of the plan, it also, in return, guarantees certain compensatory benefits to all the parties who are subject to the system.

The scheme is, therefore, one for mutual advantage. If the party gives up something, he receives something in return, and, supposedly, something more certain and valuable than that which is yielded for the thorough working of the scheme.

We may consider, therefore, and more particularly, what the system proposes and promises.

Speaking comprehensively, it pledges the churches and the ministers that it will do for them certain definite things.

First, the system promises the church that it shall be provided with a pastor, and that

without the necessity of bidding for him in a competitive market, that in the adjustment the church's needs shall receive fair consideration, and that the church shall be fairly cared for without its being under the necessity of seeking and finding a minister by and for itself.

In other words, the system promises the laity that the local charges shall be supplied, and kept supplied, with pastors, and that this shall be done through officers who have direct charge and supervision of the pastors, and who have a general, and more or less exact, knowledge of all the ministers and of all the churches. It promises that all this knowledge possessed by bishops, presiding elders, district superintendents, or equivalent officials, shall be used for the benefit of the local churches, which, in the very nature of things, cannot have such comprehensive knowledge of the many ministers or of the needs of the many other local charges. It promises that the appointing power, which seeks the fullest information, shall provide pastors for the various charges, so that the laymen need not be compelled to go out into the market-place and bargain for and hire a minister for their church.

Second, the system gives certain guarantees to the minister.

Thus it guarantees, first, that the preacher shall be provided with a pastoral charge; second, that, if he does faithful and successful work, he need not be concerned about his next appointment, for the appointing power will concern itself about that; and, third, that when the time comes for him to leave his present charge he shall receive another place, and that in the mutual adjustment he shall be equitably treated.

This insures steady employment and justice in the assignment, so that the minister is not compelled to go around begging for a place to preach.

Thus the system promises the minister that his interests shall be looked after by those who have authority to care for him and provide a pulpit, and insures him relief from anxiety and the necessity of finding for himself a pastoral charge, as those having power to procure it assure him a place in which to preach.

The system promises the preacher a chance to get a support, with a probability of a living, though not an assurance of a fixed and absolutely certain amount of money.

It promises him fair consideration and an equitable pastoral assignment: that is to say, equitable in view of the needs of the work, the just claims of other preachers, his own personal ability, and in view of the character of

the work he has done and, at the time, is able to do.

The system promises him employment during his effective years, effective not merely in a technical sense, but in the sense of real capability, and that it never will, on a mere technicality, deprive him of his right to a place so long as he is really fit and able to do the work of a pastor and preacher.

Then, when the period of permanent weakness and incapacity comes, through the decay of the physical or mental powers, so that he is strictly non-effective, the system assures him of a claim upon certain funds, which are growing more considerable every year, and a guarantee of something toward a financial support. In other words, the Church, during his effective years, encourages him by the promise to lay aside that which will be for him a sort of an endowment life insurance, payable after he ceases to be an active minister or pastor. In addition, it promises that in case of his decease it will provide an annual payment to aid his widow and young children, and, if more is needed for the minister or his family, the system extends the hope that the stated pension may be supplemented from a fund based upon individual need.

Practically, the system says to the pastor: Take no thought for the morrow or your fu-

ture appointment. Go on with your work and do your best. Be not anxious about your future charge. The legitimate authorities will attend to that for you and see that your interests are safeguarded.

The system says to the minister: While you are in the pastorate, and, as long as you do intelligent and faithful work, the authorities will back you and endeavour to defend you from injustice, and, as long as you do your duty judiciously and well, no disgruntled or venomous individual will be permitted to dislodge you from your charge or prevent your getting as good a place.

It says to the pastor: If you do faithful and successful work where you are, you will get, when you are moved, a proper place, presumably as good or a better place, as the needs of the work will justify, and the presumption is that you will get what you deserve, or at least an equitable appointment in the adjustment between you and your ministerial brethren, the equities in adjustment implying the needs of the churches, the rights of other ministers, and your own ability, judged by what you have made of yourself and the work you have already done and can do.

The system assures the minister that to whatever charge he is sent, and whenever he is appointed, he there will be kindly received

and loyally sustained by the people of the charge, and, in proof, it points to the fact that every lay member has obligated himself to obey the law and conform to the system of pastoral assignment, which obligation implies loyal support of the minister on the part of the laity in the charge to which the preacher has been appointed.

It is to be noted, however, that the system does not promise that the minister always will get, or at any time receive, just what he wishes. Neither does it promise that the local church will get just what it wants, at all times, or, indeed, at any time.

But the system does promise that the individual preacher and the individual charge shall always receive intelligent and sympathetic consideration, and that, as far as possible, there shall be at all times an equitable adjustment of pastors to churches, in view of all the circumstances, the final decision being left to, and made by, the bishop who presides over the Conference, or the constituted appointing power.

On the other hand, the system expects that when the pastoral assignment has been made all parties will submit and accept the decision of the bishop, the church giving the pastor a fair chance and the minister rendering faithful service to the charge, even if the

parties do not concede the absolute wisdom of the appointment.

In brief, then, the system promises and obligates itself:

First, to provide churches with pastors, and ministers with pastoral charges; and,

Second, that there shall be an equitable adjustment, not merely between one church and one minister, but equitable as between all the churches and all the ministers, at the same time.

The condition upon which the Church thus obligates itself through this system being obedience on the part of the ministry to the appointment, and acquiescence on the part of the laity to the assignment.

In a sense, this is a contract system which the minister understands and into which he voluntarily enters, distinctly accepting all the stipulations, while the laity constitute the contracting party of the other part equally self-obligated to do the reciprocal thing: namely, to accept and sustain the minister who has been duly appointed.

Back of the system, therefore, is the whole Church, self-obligated—sworn, so to speak, to conform to and to uphold this system of pastoral assignment.

It is a contract between the laity and the ministry. The laity consent and the clergy

consent, and, so, it is a common agreement entered into voluntarily by the party of the one part and the party of the other part.

The preacher agrees to go where he is sent, and the people agree to take the preacher who is sent to them, and there is supposed to be no candidating by the preacher for a place, and it is understood that there is no electing of pastors by the churches.

It is a mutual contract which equally binds both parties at all times, so that it is not fair for one party to be bound to conform, while the other assumes that he is free to ignore the agreement and violate the law with impunity. Both clergy and laity—pastors and churches—are equally bound. So, it is because of this mutual obligation on the part of the ministers and the lay-members that the system is able to keep its wonderful and most helpful pledges to both pastors and people.

VII

DOES THE SYSTEM KEEP ITS PROMISES?

THE question now is: Does this system carry out its purpose and fulfil its promises? Answering the question generally, it must be said that the system does keep its pledges. It does provide pastors and places.

First, to the church it gives a minister.

Second, to the minister it gives a place where he may preach.

It supplies the churches with pastors and it gives employment to its ministers.

To do these two things is a great achievement, and the system does accomplish these things. The system does give every preacher an appointment, and it does supply every charge with a pastor, and it does both of these things more perfectly than any other system of pastoral supply in Protestantism. This, at least, must be conceded to this itinerant system of pastoral assignment by an appointing power.

Scrutinizing the method, we find that it is a system of consideration, arbitration, and decision.

There is consideration of the needs of the general and the local work of the denomination, there is study of the ministers and of the churches, and there is arbitration of the conflicting claims and needs of the ministers, and of the conflicting needs and claims of the local churches, so that it is a great system of consideration and arbitration in an effort to deal equitably with pastors and with pastoral charges. What is more, the decisions are made by disinterested parties.

In this arbitration there is an arbiter to decide between competing desires and conflicting interests, and that arbiter by law and common agreement is the bishop or appointing power.

It is a system that is not to work, and cannot work, in a haphazard way, but one in which the responsibility of decision and final authority is placed, not anywhere or everywhere, but somewhere, and that in a definite centre in a legally selected appointing power, and the system, therefore, is calculated to work equally well, under the same conditions, anywhere and everywhere, at all times, and among all people.

Whatever may be said or thought of it in

other regards, it must be admitted that it is practically and actually a working system.

It has been working for more than a hundred and seventy-five years, and still the system is working, and, generally speaking, is working well.

In proof of this, we have the appointments of preachers made at the sessions of the Annual Conferences, and at other times, affecting tens of thousands of ministers every year, and as many charges are supplied with pastors, and that with a certainty and thoroughness not found under any other Protestant system of ministerial supply, while the system, in the main, gives to both ministers and members a satisfaction much greater than from any other method, while the efficient results are not equalled by any other pastoral plan. Fewer preachers are without places, and fewer churches are without pastors. Indeed, under the itinerant system of appointment, if thoroughly worked, no pastor is without a church and no church is without a pastor.

It must be admitted that generally the adjustments seem fair, and, in the outcome, prove to be good.

Now and then a preacher thinks he has not received his deserts, and, abstractly speaking, he may not have received all he deserved, yet when he goes to his charge in the right spirit,

and does his work faithfully, the assignment turns out well.

So, now and then, some of the laity think they have been unfairly treated in the matter of appointment, but when they receive the newly appointed pastor in the proper spirit, and cordially coöperate with him, the arrangement proves to be a good one.

Even the church which complained about the assignment, and bitterly attacked the bishop, has, after a time, concluded the appointment was providential, and has requested the reassignment of the very same man to whom it had objected, or to whom it was inclined to object.

Sometimes an appointment of a preacher may not be just what he deserved, and the assignment to a particular church may not, so far as the church is concerned, be ideal, and yet in both cases the adjustment may be entirely equitable, in view of the merits of other ministers and the needs and claims of other churches, for in making the appointments the bishop must consider all the ministers and all the churches.

But the question is pressed: Does the system fully keep its promises?

Does it fairly and fully work according to its purpose, and does it fulfil its pledge in every particular?

Is the contract fairly and fully lived up to by all the contracting parties at all times?

Does the system work out, or, to change the form of the query, is the system worked out, according to the agreement, and in strict harmony with the exact terms, and with the true spirit of the formal and legal contract? Do those in the system work it according to its intention?

For example: Does the pastor receive consistent and equitable treatment from the appointing power by whom he is sent to a charge, and also by the parties of the other part to whom he is sent?

It is important to ask how is the contract kept?

Are the contracting parties mutually faithful? Do the laity adhere to the system and on their part fulfil the terms of their agreement? Do the ministers give faithful adherence on their part? Or, do some of the parties to the contract disregard their solemn obligation, and, failing to perform their part, more or less defeat the intention of the system and prevent the proper working of the ecclesiastical mechanism?

We must ask: Does the system fulfil its promises?

Does it work out as to the fair and full consideration of ministers and of churches?

Does it as to the ministerial acceptance of appointments? Does it as to the lay acceptance of the ministerial appointee? Does it as to the financial support given by the charge to the regularly appointed pastor? Does it as to the completeness of the service rendered the church by the pastor who has been duly appointed but who, at the same time, was greatly disappointed in his assignment? Does he do his duty all the same as to degree and as to spirit?

Does the system do what it promises for the preacher? That is a specially important question: Does the system keep its word with the preacher who has entrusted to it his ministerial destinies?

Let us test it by asking a few questions:

Are ministers sure of suitable work as ministers as long as they preserve their physical and mental vigour?

Is there a " dead-line " beyond which there is little or no hope? If so, where is it, who made it, and why should it be permitted to exist?

Is there a ministerial " dead-line " before the minister is dead, or even decayed, but is merely approaching the maturity of his powers? If so, who can justify such a waste of ability and experience in refusing to permit it to be used in the work of Christ's Church?

Who can justify this cruelty to the man and his family?

How are the mature, and the older, men treated?

Are they objected to, and rudely pushed aside, when they still have ability and strength, though the calendar says they are beyond fifty and silvery hairs begin to show?

Do very young ministers permit men, who are in the ripeness of their experience and the perfection of their powers, to be pushed into minor places, or to be entirely crowded out and off, so that they, in their early youth, may secure their places? If so, do they not perceive that this principle, or lack of principle, will come back to plague them in a very little while when they become a little older?

Do laymen ever say they do not want a pastor over fifty, or forty, or even thirty years of age? If so, they do a grievous wrong to many of the best pastors, and do violence to their own best interests, for a minister should be at his best at sixty and beyond, and the Church needs his experience and his thoroughly established character. If ministers in their prime are treated in that way, then the pledge given by the system is not being carried out and the responsibility for the failure rests somewhere. How would laymen like to be treated this way in their business or profession?

If such failures are permitted and continued, then the minister is not receiving the protection guaranteed by the system, and the ministry, the most important factor in the system, is being sacrificed, and the sacrifice of the minister must result in fatal injury to the system and to the Church itself.

The minister is in the system, and at the mercy of the system. He is to accept his appointment and to go wherever he is sent, and to that he has voluntarily agreed.

He is at the mercy of the system, but that is balanced by the other party in the system, the laity, agreeing to loyally take the minister who is duly appointed to the charge.

It is an agreement under the law of the Church between the party of the one part and the party of the other part—between the ministry and the laity—that there shall be this reciprocal action, and the law, both civil and ecclesiastical, will hold both parties to a complete observance of the contract.

The system is to do something *with* the minister, but it is also to do something *for* the minister.

That it does something with the minister is plain. But it will be asked, What does it do for him? Not only may the question be asked, but it should be pressed, and should be repeated at all times, for the doing with the

minister must in all equity be balanced by the doing of something for him.

It may be said that the minister is in the grip of the system, but it is a benevolent and beneficent grip that is intended to hold, help, and, it may be, save him.

The minister is in the grip of a system, it is true, and he has voluntarily placed himself in that grip, but he is in the grip of a system that promises to do justly by him, to uphold him, and to take care of him.

He is in the grip of a system which can do with him what it pleases, under certain limitations, directly by certain parties, or through others in the system, but he is in the grip of a system that in itself is beneficent in its pledged intention to do for him some good and proper thing, and the best possible thing under the circumstances, and it possesses power to make good its pledge.

It is to do with him and to do for him. If it does with him and not for him, it is a defective system, or is working defectively, and is not redeeming its pledges. But a careful study of the system itself shows that it is calculated to do something for the minister as well as something with him.

So the question is:

Does the minister receive equitable assignments: that is to say, such as he deserves and

such as are fairly within the possibilities and the equities?

First, such as he deserves in view of the number and the character of the charges to be provided for; and,

Second, such as he deserves in view of his merit and work, and in consideration of the equally just claims of his brethren in the ministry, who in the mutual adjustment must also be regarded?

We now speak specifically and particularly of the minister, for he is the vital factor.

In answering the question as to what is done for the preacher, it must be admitted, in all fairness, that, while the appointments in the main are satisfactory, there are assignments that do not always seem perfectly equitable.

Some, indeed, seem emphatically most inequitable, and, if an inference may be drawn from persistent murmurs, one might judge that the number of alleged inequitable appointments is not diminishing, but in recent years appears to be rapidly increasing.

This, however, may not mean that the actual appointments are bad, but that the equities as to all the preachers and all the churches are supposed not to have been exactly observed.

Is the charge of inequity well founded, or is

the seeming inequity a mere accident and due to unavoidable circumstances? If there was no intention to do an inequitable thing either toward the preacher or the Church, why is the allegation of inequity made? Is it simply a chronic outcropping of the tendency in human nature to complain? Or is it a hasty judgment without a knowledge of all the facts?

It may be admitted that some seemingly inequitable appointments were not intentionally unjust. Mistakes and accidents may occur under any human arrangement. Such accidents occur in every walk of life. However, in the Church there should be special care to avoid such accidents and to prevent that which even seems to suggest a shadow of injustice or even faulty judgment.

Certainly all appointments should be perfectly fair and the intention should always be perfectly pure.

Why, then, should there ever be an inequitable assignment or one that suggests even a seeming injustice to any party?

Why are not all pastoral appointments perfectly equitable?

On general principles, it may be assumed, and should be assumed, that the bishop, or appointing power, wants to make good and fair appointments. It is supposedly his pleasure, and to his interest, to make proper ad-

justments, for he wishes the prosperity of the work and failure would reflect on him.

Why, then, is there not always a perfect outcome in making the pastoral adjustments?

There are various reasons, and, in answer, we give a few points:

First, it may be said that human knowledge and human judgment are not always absolutely perfect, and, therefore, there may be mistakes. That is so in human affairs everywhere.

Second, somebody may have failed to make a full and fair representation of the case, and it may be possible that some one has misrepresented the facts in regard to the minister or the church, or by placing too great emphasis on some other minister or pressing too strongly for some other church the particular case has been overshadowed and lost its true perspective. In every human sphere where there is competition there are such possibilities.

Third, the circumstances do not permit, at all times, the giving of that which the minister fairly deserves, for there are not enough good places for all the good men, and the bishop, or appointing power, cannot put all into the good place that will hold only one. So sometimes to give a certain preacher the place he would like, and which, abstractly, he deserved, might work gross injustice to other ministers

who have equal and possibly superior claims.

Equity means fairness to all, but not the gratification of all desires, or even the giving of the place the preacher really deserves. Circumstances and general equity to all might prevent that in some particular case. At the same time, many assignments which on the surface are not regarded as exactly equitable might, and probably would be, so regarded if all the inner facts were known to the public as they were to the bishop and his official advisers.

Fourth, the free action of the appointing power is frequently interfered with directly or indirectly by others.

This is boldly affirmed from many quarters. Even bishops have complained that their well-studied plans have been disturbed and defeated, and others have declared that the legal, free, and fair working of the system has been interrupted, and right appointments in particular places have been prevented by outside parties creating unnecessary difficulties that have made the execution of equitable plans practically impossible. That the appointing power had authority to override these interferences is conceded, but, in view of the unpleasant conditions which would make the work difficult, the bishop has been advised, or deemed it wise, to make another arrangement.

The interferences with the appointing power generally come from two directions: First, there may be interference by some laymen; and, secondly, there may be interference by some ministers, and the interference may prevent the proper working of the system.

In the first place, laymen sometimes have interfered by forestalling, or endeavouring to forestall, the action of the appointing power. This has been done in various ways. For example, by formally fixing upon a particular preacher and demanding that he be appointed to a particular church. In some instances it has been done by over-strenuous representations that practically distort the facts or give an exaggerated presentation by emphasizing certain matters to such an extent that the one case receives a disproportionate amount of attention to the disadvantage of other cases. Sometimes it is done by invoking influential assistance and bringing pressure to bear from other directions. In exceptional instances there have been positive threats of various kinds: for example, some have been bold enough to say that, unless they got the very preacher they asked for, they would cut down the salary, they would not contribute to the benevolences of the denomination, they would not receive any other preacher, they would withdraw from the membership of the church,

they would not support any other preacher, or they would shut the doors of the church against any other preacher than the one they asked for.

Of course, all these things are contrary to the spirit of the system, are contrary to the law of the Church, and violate the obligation which each lay member has voluntarily taken, and, as to closing the church against the regularly appointed pastor, the civil courts would intervene and compel the instant opening of the doors to the regular appointee, but, nevertheless, it is rumoured that such tactics have sometimes obstructed the free action of the appointing power. Fortunately there are very few instances of this character, and, when they do occur, the bishop should set himself against them and be unmoved by them, for they are dishonorable and illegal attempts at coercion and are destructive of the rights of both churches and ministers.

In the second place, now and then a minister attempts to interfere with the free operation of the appointing power.

Usually such interference is not in the interest of the man himself, but in the interest of some other party, or, sad to say, directly or indirectly, against some other minister. To the credit of the ministers it should be observed that the latter action is comparatively

rare. Occasionally the preacher may try to persuade himself that the adverse word he drops to a layman or a minister may be in the interest of righteousness, but a more thorough analysis might show him that in it was a trace of jealousy or unbrotherliness.

Whatever may be the motive, such action works to the detriment of the cause and results in injury to individuals and churches.

Complaint has been quite common in recent days that there is positive interference with the free action of the general superintendency, so that the Church has been losing the general and superior direction intended by the ecclesiastical system, and that much of the direction is not from above, but from below, and not in harmony with the law, and, therefore, prevents the officers elected by the Church and charged with administrative functions, and duly empowered to discharge these duties, from performing their full duty in this regard.

If these complaints are well grounded, and, in some instances, they certainly are, they should promptly be corrected, for when the law makes such provision as it does in the important work of making pastoral adjustments the law should be obeyed, and there should be no toleration of parties who are under the law and yet act out of harmony with

the law, for this leads to friction and is destructive of the system.

If the bishop is not freely permitted to perform his episcopal duty in the matter of making pastoral appointments, how is it possible for the Church to have episcopal supervision and direction, and what becomes of the general superintendency or of any other appointive power?

If the bishop is not permitted to freely fix the pastoral appointments, to whom can the preacher look for defence and justice?

Is the average minister then to become a mere football, to be tossed about by miscellaneous parties without any effective will of his own, and is the bishop to be permitted to pick him up and place him only after he has become a spent ball and the game is about over?

If so, then the system will be destroyed and displaced by an undignified scramble for the good places, and a scramble that has in it no element of certainty or equity, but in which scramble the unrefined who lack the sense of propriety will have the advantage, while the sensitive, manly, and Christly minister will be compelled to take the little that is left after the unseemly struggle and scuffle are over.

For a layman or minister to illegally interfere in the making of appointments not only

prevents the perfect working of the system, but it works an injustice both to preachers and people, while to do and say the things indicated is not only a violation of the Church law, but also is a dishonourable violation of their personal obligation when they individually vowed to observe, obey, and maintain the laws and usages of the denomination.

Candour compels us to point to these things which exist, or are said to exist under the itinerant system of making ministerial appointments; but, nevertheless, the system as a system does fulfil its pledges to the ministry and to the laity. That there may be exceptions does not disprove, but may prove, the rule.

In the main, both churches and ministers are cared for as no other system cares for its charges and their pastors, and this is demonstrated by the fact that the system assigns tens of thousands of ministers every year and there are comparatively very few complaints. The preachers are sure of places and the churches are sure of pastors.

That ministers have not always received their deserts, and that sometimes positive injustice seems to have been done, may be admitted, yet on the whole the system has generally worked out equitably.

True, there have been instances where there

does not appear to have been fair play, but then the fault has not been in the system but in spite of the system, and because the system was not adhered to.

A minister at times seems to have been crushed, but that very system whenever it got a fair chance has lifted and placed him on high, so that it is hard to keep down a really good and successful minister, for the man who does thorough work is likely to come up, though many forces appear to be against him.

If any defects exist they may not be chargeable to the system. They may not be the fault of the system, but the faulty working of the system, which is not the fault of the system, but the fault of its faulty workers.

The machine may be perfect, but, if it is not properly managed, the outcome will not be perfect. Then we must not blame the mechanism, but the imperfect handling of the machine. Under such circumstances the thing to do is not to break up the good mechanism but to secure its right management.

So the itinerant system of pastoral assignment is adapted to its purpose and will work well if it is worked right.

Those who work it may not work it perfectly, yet it can be worked properly, for the system is calculated to keep its promises, and it does work well when those in it work it well.

VIII

RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES, AND DUTIES UNDER THE SYSTEM

UNDER the system there are mutual rights, privileges, and duties which should be regarded by all concerned, and the rights and privileges are to be qualified, or regulated, by the duties, for there can be no general fairness unless a proper balance is preserved by all.

Both ministers and laymen have rights under the system which they expect the Church to protect. There is, in the first place, the general right to have their interests protected by the duly constituted authorities who are designated to study these interests.

The minister has a right to expect that he shall receive a proper pastoral assignment and an equitable one in view of his merits, the kind of work to be done, and the rights of the charges and of the other ministers associated in this mutual system.

So, on the other hand, the local church has a right to expect to receive a proper pastor who can do the work the charge needs, but that

the appointment shall be qualified by the needs of other charges and the just claims of all the preachers, for the local church also is in a mutual organization and everybody is to be considered in relation to every other body.

The people have rights which must be regarded, but they are rights under and within the system.

The laity have rights, but not at the sacrifice of the ministry.

So the ministers have rights under the system which must be respected, but not at the sacrifice of the churches.

There are equitable balances between these separate and mutual rights, and the balance must be preserved for the mutual benefit of both classes, so the laity must remember the rights of the ministry, and the ministry must not forget the rights of the laity, and both must perceive that this mutuality may defeat the wish of the minister or the desire of the local church; but, whatever the outcome, mutual justice should be done.

What is more, the equitable care of the local church, or the equitable adjustment of the preacher, is not to depend on demands made by the local charge, or pleas made by the minister, but to be determined by the need of the work and the merit of the man, both of which are presumably known by the appointing

power directly or through well-informed official advisers.

Neither the church nor the preacher may make any representation to the bishop, and yet both have a right to expect that the intelligent appointing power, being adequately informed, shall properly provide both for the church and for the preacher.

Nevertheless, there is the privilege, or the recognized right, of petition, and the layman has a right to make his representation to the bishop, if he desires to do so, and the minister has an equal right to state his case, and the appointing power should see that consultation wherever possible be conceded. Both preachers and people, however, should perceive that representations should be made in good time, and not at the end, when the decisions are finally being made. Then there may be no time for breaking up arrangements and making new adjustments. After the President of the United States has heard representations, he requires and demands time for consideration, meditation, and weighing the different views he has heard before he decides whom he will appoint, and so the bishop must have time for thought before he make his final decision.

The right appointment may not be exactly what is indicated in the statement of the lay-

man, or in the expressed wish of the preacher, for there are other churches and other preachers to be considered at the same time, and the needs and merits of one may have to be put beside the merits and needs of others, and so particular cases may be modified by their mutual relation with other cases.

Then a distinction may have to be made between the wish of those who speak for a certain charge and the actual need of the church, and the appointing power may have to ascertain the real need, which, being different from the supposed need, as so earnestly represented, the bishop, in his endeavour to make a righteous adjustment, should be expected to govern himself accordingly.

The common duty for all under the system is to accept the announced judgment of the appointing power. Any attempt to revise and reverse appointments after they have been finally and formally made and announced is not only a violation of the law, but also is calculated to throw everything into confusion.

If changes are made after the appointments have been given to the public, no church would certainly know who is its pastor and no minister could certainly know which was his charge, for the change in a few cases would probably disturb many other arrangements,

and the result would be the disparagement of the system, which would soon bring its destruction.

The time for representations should be some time before the adjournment of the Conference, so as to give sufficient time for study, and then, when the appointments are announced, they should solidly stand, unless in a case of health or humanity which had not been expected or understood.

The churches should stand for this as well as the ministers, but particularly the churches, first, because it is the system, and, secondly, because they are as likely as anybody else to suffer if appointments regularly made are suddenly torn up, for, after Conference, there is not the same opportunity to make adjustments and readjustments. During the session of the Conference the adjustments are in progress and changes may be made, but when the appointments are announced they are "fixed," and it is to the interest of the denomination that they remain settled.

He who tries to unsettle them not only would disarrange the appointments, but makes himself a disturber of the peace of the Church. Those who are in the system should abide by the system, because that is the right thing to do, and because it has been demonstrated that the church that accepts the unexpected or un-

desirable appointment and does its full duty finds that the adjustment works out well.

In this matter the minister is specially concerned, and it is to his interest also that the system be worked according to its spirit and up to the very letter of the law.

If it is not so worked, he will have nothing on which he can depend. Instead of a rock, he will be building on sand. The consistent working of the system is his defence. Preachers realize this, and also realize the vow by which they obligated themselves, and the result is that almost universally and unanimously they submit to the decision of the appointing power, and, frequently, when they feel they have not received what they deserved. But they expect everybody else to do the same.

The Church must stand by the system for its own sake, and especially for the sake of the minister who is in it.

It must be recognized that the preacher has rights which should be respected by all concerned.

The preacher submits to the system, but he submits because the party of the other part, the layman, likewise agrees to submit. He is a party to the contract, and he has a right to point to the agreement and to demand that which is nominated in the bond.

He promises to submit to a definite system, but not to a violation of the system, and a spirited ministry with a right spirit can be preserved only by a strict observance of the system by all parties.

If the Church is to succeed, the Church must have a self-respecting and properly independent clergy, and, to have such a clergy, the humblest preacher must feel sure that his rights, and every right, will be amply protected, and that he will be cared for equitably, so that he may pursue his work quietly and confidently, working without worry or anxiety, undistressed by the thought of his future appointment, whether he has a call or no call, feeling certain that he will have fair consideration by the appointing power, and receive his just reward, and not merely the leavings after the specially favoured and the diligently worked for have been provided with the good places.

In the system the rights of all should be fully recognized, privileges should be permitted where they do not impinge on rights or violate law, and duties should be met and discharged by all parties. Then the system will run smoothly and produce the best results for the denomination as a whole, and for the individual as well.

IX

PRESENT CONDITIONS AND TENDENCIES

WITH the law in plain sight and the plan of pastoral assignment clearly defined, there should be a serious study not only of the practical workings of the system at the present time, but also of present and probable tendencies that are now asserting themselves or which are assumed to be casting their shadows from the possible future.

The question, therefore, before us at this moment is: What are the tendencies in the itinerant system of ministerial appointments at the present time, and what may have to be considered and guarded against in anticipation of future possibilities or probabilities?

The first thing that impresses the close observer is the unfortunate fact that there are conditions, movements, and tendencies that interfere with the consistent working of the system.

The conditions and tendencies may appear

if we propound and try to answer a few questions.

Let us begin by asking: Is the tendency to greater strictness or to greater laxity in the practical working of the system? The answer may be approached by asking other questions. Thus:

Do both parties to the mutual contract truly leave the making of the pastoral appointments to the presiding bishop, or the appointing power? It is to be feared that this question cannot truthfully be answered by an unqualified affirmative. Many do—the most do—but some do not, and those who do not make things difficult for the loyal many.

So we may ask: Is there a growing disposition on the part of the people to select, or elect, their pastors, and to regard such a selection as a practical finality which must, or should, bind the appointing power?

Is there not a growing disposition on the part of some preachers to work up their own appointments, and to expect their self-made arrangements to stand without regard to the interests of the general brotherhood?

Is there now such a thing as a "call" from a church, and is that call supposed to determine the appointment?

To put it in another way: Is there a growing tendency to practically and actually con-

sider the "call" final, and to compel preachers without "calls" or "invitations" to take what is left, without any consideration of service or fitness, and to compel other churches, that have not "called" a particular preacher, to take only men who have not been asked by any church?

The question must be repeated: How is the contract in relation to pastoral appointments being carried out?

Is the system being worked consistently according to the rule? Who actually makes the appointments in every case? The law and usage say the bishop, or appointing power, shall fix the appointments of the preachers. Is he freely permitted to do so? Are efforts made to coerce him? If so, do they ever succeed?

Is there a growing demand that the bishop shall not do what he was elected to do? Is there a demand that the bishop shall not make assignments according to the results of his oversight of the work in general and particular, but that the bishop, or appointing power, shall simply, like a clerk, certify appointments which others have made or planned? Is there, under great pressure, a tendency to force the bishop to practically abdicate now and then and simply become a sort of notary public, at-

testing with his signature what others have done?

Are certain parties practically and, perhaps, persistently, trying to force bishops into such an undignified and illegal position, and, simply, that they may rule and prosecute their own personal and selfish plans, regardless of the welfare of the entire ministry and of all the churches?

It is to be feared that an emphatic affirmative is the only honest answer to these queries.

Again, we should ask: What is the present tendency in relation to the ministry?

What is the present working of the system doing, and probably going to do, for the particular and the average minister? What is it going to do *with* him and *for* him in the future, and in the very near future?

That is specially important for the minister in his youth, or in his prime, to know, and especially when he is most mature, and it is exceedingly important for the whole Church to know it, for its prosperity depends very largely upon the condition of its ministry.

Is the system going to do *with* the minister and not for him, or is it going to do something *for* him as well as with him? Is the minister, under an inconsistently or illegally worked system, to be dealt with by chance and

be the victim of accident, or of uncontrolled whims on the part of a few, or is he to be cared for by a beneficial and philosophic system consistently administered and conscientiously sustained?

The body of the ministry, and each and every man in it, wants to know, and has a right to know, what the tendencies are and how the system will be worked, and he should receive a definite and satisfying answer.

The system of pastoral assignment is in the history and the law of the Church and may be clearly understood. As has been shown, the system promises the minister certain things, and the Church has obligated itself to fulfil these pledges.

The question now is: Will the system be permitted to keep its promises, or will it be prohibited or prevented from keeping them, and will it be prevented by individuals who have solemnly vowed to sustain the system?

After certain assurances, the minister has voluntarily placed himself within the grip of the system. He is in its grip. It can do *with* him according to its will and pleasure, but that is compensated for by its promise to do something equitable for him, and this pledge the Church voluntarily made to the minister.

Now the minister wants to know whether the system is simply going to grip him, and

nothing more, or, while it holds him, is it going to do something beneficial and equitable for him? Is it going to fairly care for him, or will it leave him to chance, the miserable mercies of the fates, and the minus experiences of the hindmost?

The minister wants to know, and the Church as a Church wants to know, for no honest Church wants, or will allow, unfair treatment of its ministers, but it will live up to its agreement when it learns how the contract reads.

Again the question is pressed: Is the system working according to the legal and voluntary agreement?

The general answer will be that it used to do better than sometimes it does to-day in some places, and older ministers and members will say: "Things are not quite as they were in our younger days."

The law remains the same in print and in public declarations, but it is plain that in too many instances there is a loose and inconsistent operation. The evident facts that prove this are not hard to find, and these facts show that there is a tendency to disregard the system in particular instances to gratify a particular church, or, in exceptional cases, to please a particular preacher.

There is a tendency to practically ignore the appointing power by making arrange-

ments between churches and ministers prior to the Conference session and before consultation between the parties and the bishop, or appointing power. Some local churches make independent arrangements with preachers to serve them as though they were under another system and not an appointive system of pastoral supply.

These engagements to some extent have been encouraged, tolerated, or participated in by some preachers who have made arrangements with churches, and with them they share the responsibility of weakening or making irregular the action of the legal system.

The practical election of pastors has crept into some quarterly conferences, some official boards, and even some boards of trustees. There is no law for this, and certainly the law does not confer the determination of such spiritual matters upon a board whose function is to care for certain temporalities, such as the material property of the Church.

The "call," though un-Methodistic, is increasingly heard in the land, and that with increasing intensity and insistence. Calls of churches or invitations placed in the hands of ministers by churches are not known to the law, or the legal usage, of the denomination, and binding engagements between the charge and the preacher are contrary to the law.

The " previous engagement," indeed, is perhaps in written form, duly signed by officials, and, it may be, by ministers, generally in the form of letters exchanged between the parties, and, on the basis of these previous arrangements, demands are made upon the appointing power to recognize and ratify such agreements, as though they were as binding as formal and legal contracts that the bishop must sanction.

Practically, in some quarters, it is beginning to be a settled idea that no minister is expected to be favoured, but the one armed with such a call, as though that were his commission from a higher authority which the bishop must accept, and no church is to be favoured that has not issued such an invitation and has received such an acceptance; whereas, the system supposes a full consideration and a fair decision for the preacher regardless of any invitation or no invitation; and also for the church that has not issued a call, but puts its trust in the intelligence and justness of the legally designated authority, so that the poor church as well as the rich, and the modest preacher as well as the most prominent, may have, and shall have, equitable treatment with an open and unrestricted field, and the rich church shall have just as many rights as the poor church.

So common has this thing become in some localities that some people say of a preacher: "He has no call. No church wants him." But it does not follow, at least it should not follow, that because he has no "call" no church would want him, for many of the best ministers come to Conference without any invitation from a church.

Even ministers are helping to break down the system, and ultimately to break down themselves, by putting too great stress upon such invitations. Thus men say: "I should be sent here or there because I have a call from that church," and months before the Conference session a preacher will say of another: "He is going to such a church. He has a call."

All this means that the call is to determine the appointment, and not the study of the needs of the Church, and of all the churches on the one hand, and, on the other, the study of the rights and merits of all the preachers, which study the system devolves upon the appointing power.

It is a pleasant thing for a bishop to appoint a preacher to a charge when it is mutually agreeable to the preacher and the church and for the best interests of the work, but the system intends that the appointment shall be determined not because of the call, but because

of the fitness of the man and in view of the equitable rights of the other ministers and other churches; and, if these conditions are not met, the system supposes the appointment shall not be made at all.

An invitation is not a finality, but only a suggestion, and should have no more force in the mind of the bishop who is making the appointments.

To send a minister to a church simply because he has a "call," and to refuse to send a better and more deserving preacher whom the church needs, is to put a premium on a system of election not known to the Church law, and to violate the pledge of the denomination that every minister shall receive equitable treatment and be properly cared for, in view of his merit, his service, and his adaptation to the work, without any reference to a call or invitation of which the law of the Church is not cognizant.

If a presiding elder, or district superintendent, or other official adviser recommends the appointment of a man because the charge has invited him, and does not recommend the man better fitted for the place, who happens to be without the call, he is unfaithful to his trust, and if the bishop yields to the pressure to place the less fitted man in the place because he has been invited, and turns aside the

worthier minister who is better adapted to the kind of work needed by the charge, but has no call, he has failed to observe his solemn obligation, and has practically ceased to be a general superintendent in fact, for he is not superintending but being superintended.

The tendency on the part of some influential churches to demand that the invitation to the minister shall be regarded as a finality, and the asserted tendency of the appointing power now and then to yield to the demand, is contrary to the genius of the system, which implies that no appointments shall be made until after a study of the merits of all the ministers, and the needs of all the churches has been made by the appointing power; and, further, that the appointments shall be made in view of the results of such a thorough study.

In this system the appointment of a preacher, or the supply of a charge with a pastor, should not be, and is not intended to be, conditioned upon a call, but the minister should get what he deserves without a call and in harmony with the equities that belong to his brother preachers and the needs of all the churches.

A presiding elder, or district superintendent, when a preacher inquires as to his possibilities or probabilities, has no right to turn on him and say: "Oh, go and get a call from

some church!" A thing like that shows the official's unfitness for his delicate duties and would be sufficient ground for removing him from his office.

The Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church decided that such an officer had no right to give such an answer. The decision is as follows: "A district superintendent who advises a preacher in his district to solicit and secure a formal call to some church, as a condition precedent to promising him an appointment, is guilty of grave un-Methodistic conduct." This ruling was approved by the General Conference of 1912, for which see the *Journal,* p. 567.

The tendency to settle appointments by a formal invitation began to crop out a number of years ago, and to meet it the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1884, passed an act which read as follows:

"Direct negotiations between pastors and churches in advance of the making of the appointments by the bishops are contrary to the spirit of our itinerant ministry and subversive of our ecclesiastical polity, and as such should be discouraged by our Bishops, Pastors, and people."

As the evil was not eradicated, the General Conference of the same Church, in 1912, re-

enacted the same deliverance, and this was done in response to the complaint made at that time in regard to certain confusing tendencies which were adding to the difficulties in making pastoral assignments.

The Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the Episcopal Address to the General Conference of 1912, said:

"The bargaining implies that the two parties thereto have the legal right to negotiate with each other and to carry out the agreement made. But as between a Methodist preacher and a Methodist society neither of these implications is valid, because both parties are bound by previous obligations, voluntarily entered into with other parties, with which older obligations the new is inconsistent. When nineteen thousand other Methodist preachers and as many churches rise up in protest, it does not meet the case if the respondents confidently point to a parenthetical proviso in their agreement, which declares in substance that this call and its acceptance are to become binding—'*the bishop consenting.*' Of course; it could not be otherwise. But that does not restore the forgotten vows, nor mend the discipline, nor reunite the broken covenant circle of nineteen thousand preachers and three millions of Methodist people, nor give back the apostolic note to that preacher's mes-

sage, nor redeem that pulpit from the taint of commercialism, nor heal the hurt done to the spirit of our itinerancy. . . .

"When wealthy churches assume the right to 'call' men, they call any man from anywhere. The better he is succeeding where he is, the more insistent the call. If four thousand dollars may call a man from three thousand dollars, why may not three thousand dollars call a man from two thousand dollars, and so on down—all under the guise of 'a larger opportunity'? If the bishop allows the first proposition, why not the last? So the evil spreads from special transfers to the regular Conference appointments. . . .

"As might be expected, other evils follow. The attempt to apply two antagonistic principles in dealing with the same body of men and the same communion of churches threatens to take the last element of heroism from the historic itinerancy. The caged eagle has little use for wings. Nothing else could result than what is coming to pass. We have neither one system nor the other at its best. Many of our noblest men, true to vows and loyal unto death, are made unwelcome by the churches that need them most, while young men with their vows of obedience fresh upon them feel justified in entangling all other appointments by 'considering calls.' No wonder

that it happens with increasing frequency that contrary to the plain law of the Church men leave their appointments for distant fields without consultation with superintendents or due notice to their abandoned people. Such is the confusion of discipline resulting from one persistent breach.

"All this is the more deplorable because, in the long run, neither the churches nor the preachers directly involved in calls and negotiations have gained by the innovation. There was and is a lawful method by which all interests, even those local and personal, would have been better cared for without jeopardizing the general welfare. . . .

"The ethical standards of this world may deify expediency, but as a Church of God we dare not deliberately trifle with covenant vows and fundamental equities. Justice is elemental in the righteousness of God. To ignore its demands is to either impugn the divine integrity or to confess the hollowness of our professions.

"Whatever individual pastors or congregations may do in this matter, the Church of God, standing for all the good this world knows, must be loyal to absolute righteousness in her methods as in her teachings. If our covenant with God and with each other binds us to the itinerancy, then should all concerned

have equal rights and opportunity under that system."

Toward the close of this part of the Episcopal Address the bishops asked:

"Will the General Conference and the Church uphold the bishops in refusing to consummate any arrangement involving a preliminary 'call' or understanding in violation of the common rights and common interests of all the preachers and all the churches?"

The response to this was the reënactment of the action of 1884 pronouncing against such bargains between preachers and people, declaring that these "Direct negotiations between pastors and churches in advance of the making of the appointments by the bishops are contrary to the spirit of our itinerant ministry, and subversive of our ecclesiastical polity," and declaring that these innovations "should be discouraged by our Bishops, Pastors, and people."

In this way the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912 put itself on record against these "calls" and prearrangements between preachers and the people.

The action of the General Conference of 1884 and the reënactment of 1912 were not intended to prevent either laymen or ministers making representations as to their needs or wishes at the proper time, or when appoint-

ment-making was in process, but to check the so-called "calls," or "direct negotiations between pastors and churches in the advance of the making of appointments by the bishops."

A suggestion, or a simple request, is a very different thing. Both laymen and ministers have an opportunity to deal with the appointing power. This can be done through the presiding elders, or district superintendents, and, at least, when the Annual Conference is in session and the adjustments are being considered, both laymen and preachers can come directly to the bishop and state their cases.

This is very different from churches and preachers making more or less formal contracts, and then demanding with more or less persistence that the bishop, or appointing power, ratify the arrangement, and perhaps adding to the demand an open or covert threat as to what will be done if they are not allowed to arrange the appointment according to their own pleasure, regardless of the general interests of the entire work.

That too many have been interfering with the mechanism, and trying to work it contrary to its intention, is so manifest that a mere statement of the fact carries instant conviction.

How it is being interfered with is known

far and wide. In some localities the mutual agreement is not lived up to, and the contract is violated by one side or the other, and ministers are supposed to be selected without regard to the primary rights of the appointing power. Presiding elders are ignored, and it is asserted that attempts are made to dictate even to bishops. In some instances it has been stated that presiding elders simply carry out the wish of others, and it has been intimated that a bishop does not dare to make an appointment according to his own best and most enlightened judgment, but simply makes the appointment because others have previously decided upon it. If this be true, then it is an irregular, though temporary, deposition of the bishop, and an abrogation of the episcopacy in this particular case, a thing which no bishop should for a moment permit.

This idea of direct arrangement between preachers and laymen is sporadic rather than general, but it reveals a demoralizing tendency which calls for watchfulness and resistance, and which is so insidious and dangerous that bishops and general conferences have rebuked it in strong terms.

It has not been universal by any means, but it is a tendency, and a tendency of such a destructive character, and so injurious to the interests of preachers and churches generally,

that churches and ministers must take notice and defend themselves against it.

While this destructive tendency exists, another tendency is to be placed against it, and that is the disposition to complain and protest against such a disturbance of the itinerant system of pastoral appointment as a violation of law, of solemn obligations, and of the mutual rights of the people and of the preachers.

X

TENDENCIES ANALYZED

THE tendency on the part of churches and ministers to make prearrangements between themselves in the matter of pastoral supply, prior to the proper time for making appointments by the legal authorities, and then expecting, or even demanding, their ratification by the appointing power because of this mutual agreement between laymen and ministers, has assumed such proportions as to cause alarm.

In view of present conditions and future possibilities, the Church, including both preachers and people, should pause and consider what the tendency is in itself and what it presages if it is to continue unchecked.

An analysis will show that the effort to fix appointments by this prearrangement between members and ministers is a clear violation of the law of pastoral assignment in the itinerant system, which intends that the assignments shall be freely made by the appointing authority, which power should come to its work without being bound in any way.

The "call" or prearrangement between people and preachers has certain characteristics which lead to many evil results. Probably the very persons who participate in these negotiations have not realized their inconsistent nature and their mischievous trend. Hence a brief statement of some of the faulty qualities in the tendency and a few of the evil consequences from its continuance will help to a revelation and realization of the results of such an irregular and illegal practice.

The prearrangement between people and preachers discounts the bishop, or appointing power, and makes the bishop less than the law intends, and so in this particular is a violation of the law.

It interferes with the free working of the appointing power by laying restraints upon the bishop, and the complications involved limit and tend to destroy the freedom of the bishop in his consideration and decision as to all the churches and all the preachers.

That others undertake to determine the pastoral adjustments tends to weaken the bishop as a general overseer, and also, and consequently, to prevent his being a supervising power; whereas the law and the genius of the system make him an overseeing, planning, and executive power, with the initiative that can

exist only with broad oversight and general authority.

It destroys the idea and power of the general superintendency, and not only practically but actually diminishes the power of directing that belongs to the overseer who knows the men and the work generally.

It makes the bishop, or appointing power, a mere approving or confirming officer, expected to approve what others without legal authority have agreed upon. So it is destructive of real oversight and potential superintendency, if individuals limited to a locality, and who cannot know the ministers and the churches generally, undertake to make pastoral adjustments in a mutual system instead of leaving it to the appointing power that has the broader information.

The bishop is practically, and often actually, limited and prevented in his desire to do the best for the entire work because of the publicity given to the prearrangement and through fear of the effect of disappointing the local church that has involved itself in the claim for a particular pastor.

As the Episcopal Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912 said:

" As for the bishop concerned, he is left to choose between so many involved alternatives,

usually hazardous, that in most cases he is unduly pressed to give legal sanction to the arrangements illegally initiated. But in its legal essence his part in the transaction is a travesty upon his high office. Every Methodist knows this; every bishop feels it. It cannot be that our brethren who have lapsed into this practice have measured the far-reaching purport of their action."

Again the Address says: "Nominally the appointing power is still free, but in practice 'the godly judgment of the bishop' is often restricted in its operation."

The aim of the prearrangement is to preempt the ministers concerned and to practically take them out of the hands of the appointing power, so that, assuming that these cases are already settled by the other parties, the bishop would not consider and handle them in the general adjustment.

It is plain, therefore, if this method so prevailed on the part of every church and every minister, there would be really nothing for the appointing power to do, and the bishop, or the appointing authority, would be eliminated, which of course would be contrary to the law and the genius of the system.

This all means the practical and actual loss of an independent and disinterested arbiter,

who, in the interest of all, can make decisions between conflicting claims, merits, and needs.

Practically the prearrangement between people and preacher is an assertion of non-dependence upon and independence of the appointing power on the part of the churches and the ministers engaging therein. They are taking care of themselves and expecting, and practically forcing, the bishop to consider the matter settled because the parties have agreed among themselves.

This illegal method is vicious because it puts the local desire and the wish of the individual minister against the general interests of the whole Church, which is the basis of the system itself.

It is the local church instead of the general Church that is trying to rule, and, in all probability, ruling to the detriment of the general body.

Thus it illegally magnifies an individual church and an individual minister.

It puts the self, if not selfish, interests or wishes of a few against the interest of the many—the wish of the few as against the general welfare—the desire of a few against the greater good for the greatest number. Thus it means a preference given to a small fraction rather than the unlimited and unprejudiced consideration of the whole—of the wish

of one church rather than the interest of all the churches.

It weakens the connectional spirit and tends to destroy connectionalism itself. The ecclesiastical system is that of a connection and not of local independencies, but the method of prearrangement between local churches and particular preachers would break the body down into isolated units without any sufficient bond to bind them together in unity for the common weal.

The itinerant system is a connectional system in a connectional denomination, demanding consideration of all, with a decision for each and all, to promote the good of all, and with the idea that there is no appointment made for any one until all have been fairly considered.

The "call," or preëngagement, is the individual idea instead of the connectional; the local idea instead of the general; the consideration of one instead of the consideration of the whole Church and of every minister.

The preëngagement method disparages the body of the ministry, and radically changes the status or character of the individual preacher in the itinerant system.

It makes the preacher an isolated individual, whereas in this ministry the preachers are joined in a mutual brotherhood, in which

all agree to submit the matter of their pastoral assignments to an arbitration in which the arbiter is the bishop, or the appointing power.

Reduced to its lowest terms, the "call" idea regards the minister as an employé—a hired man—a servant who may be engaged and discharged at the will of laymen, for, if the local church has a right to hire or engage a preacher, it has a right to dismiss him. Of course, it has no right to do either, but this is the logic of the "call" and the engagement of the preacher by the people.

The entire method lowers the ministerial rank. The preacher came to the altar of the Church freely offering himself for service anywhere the appointing power might send him, but the call and engagement have made him a commercial commodity that can be bought, and that by parties who have no right to contract with him. Thus the call disparages the ministry and deteriorates the minister.

Said the aforementioned Episcopal Address of 1912:

"'A comfortable support' is the sacred claim of every man of God who in city or country is doing the work of God on the basis of God's call and covenant. But his contract is not with the Official Board or Quarterly Conference. It is an altar covenant with God

alone, who in His own way will hold the stewards of His substance to answer to Him for an honest estimate and for faithful fulfilment of their acknowledged obligation. This is our inherited Scriptural conception of the Gospel ministry and its support. Only at their peril and the peril of souls do our ministers depart from it. Crippling inconsistencies and humiliating entanglements attend every preliminary negotiation between our preachers and churches. That blunt layman who said, 'The preacher is our hired man and must do what we tell him,' was brutally business-like; but, to be candid, he was only giving the thumb-screw of commercial logic an extra turn, if the pastor had agreed to serve in that capacity for an offered and accepted consideration. Many a faithful servant of God has been unwittingly lured from his apostolic freedom into a galling pulpit serfdom, at once abject and pitiable, as the result of a commercial bargain."

As to the results the Address declares:

"The preachers become conscious that their 'acceptability' has a money value, and their families need money. But 'acceptability' as often defined involves basket collections as well as, at least, good moral character. Thus is pulpit service commercialized, and thus in time every prominent preacher is practically

appraised, and not always by the Gospel standard of success. His ' rank ' or appointment availability is determined—himself, alas! too often consenting—by lay valuation in dollars and prospects. So his ' grade ' determines presently what educational privileges his children shall have, and what his wife shall enjoy of the things that all women crave. No marvel that he clings desperately to his ' grade.' Some day it must drop. Then bishops are blamed. This all goes to show what is involved and how the ministry is secularized by negotiations between ministers and churches. Who that knows the human heart and the cost to a man of accepting lifelong poverty in order to honour a divine call can harshly judge in such a case? ''

The call-method is destructive of the independence of the minister, for he is dependent upon the parties who extended the call, and he naturally will feel that he must please them.

On the other hand, when the appointive system places him in a charge, he can look to it for backing and properly manifest his manly independence, but, if the call has placed him in the church and things do not please him and he does not please the people, he has no right to look to the bishop to back him or to lift him out of the hole into which, with his eyes wide

open, he voluntarily plunged. The minister, however, who is loyal to the itinerant system has a right to appeal to the authorities of the denomination to sustain him and care for him.

Not only does the prearrangement work disadvantageously to the body of the ministry by taking from the remaining ministers the right to be freely considered for the places to which other preachers have been "called," but, also, it works injuriously to the churches generally by taking from the rest of the churches the right to be fairly and freely considered by the appointing power for the ministers who have been so "called" to certain pastoral charges, and, also, it works injury by tearing pastors from churches where they are doing good work, and where they are needed, simply to gratify another church where they may not fit.

Thus the "call" method interferes with the appointing power, and with the rights of the body of the ministry and the mass of the churches.

The whole method prevents consistency in working the appointive system and, hence, causes unfairness which affects all classes and injures in all directions.

The call-method engenders dissatisfaction among the churches generally, and likewise among the ministers, because it works injus-

tice to ministers who are not "called" but who entrust their interests to the itinerant system, and works injury to churches who have issued no invitations but are trusting the appointing power to designate their pastors.

Under the call-method the gratification of one church in getting the invited pastor may be a keen disappointment to a number of churches, who are affected directly or indirectly, and the favouring one minister by letting him go according to the prearrangement may greatly disappoint many other ministers, and this is likely to create jealousies among some preachers who are less fortunate than their specially selected brethren.

In the outcome churches suffer and ministers suffer, for when the system is thus violated it cannot take equal care of other churches and other pastors. They cannot generally fare as well as when the rights of all are regarded with an untrammelled appointing power. This is so with the churches and ministers who do not resort to preëngagements, when others have been picked out and set aside as a special class for the purpose of evading the law, but it is likely to be so even with the churches that flatter themselves that they have secured the best prizes. The assignments under that abnormal method might gratify a present and momentary desire, but in a short

time it might be discovered that the adjustments were not proper ones in these particular cases, and were not good for the whole Church.

The call-method promotes revolt among those whose demands are not, and cannot be, met, and resentment on the part of those who adhere to the legal method and think that others are being specially favoured by receiving what they have endeavoured to secure, through preëngagements between a few churches and a few preachers.

They claim that the working is inconsistent and unfair to the ministers who have agreed to submit to the free decision of the appointing power in the mutual method which embraces all, and that it is unfair to the churches which submit to the law which is intended to bind all.

The call-method injected into the appointive method of the itinerant system works disaster and destruction. If the tendencies are tolerated, they become more and more assertive. As actions repeated become habits, so violations of the law after awhile claim the status of usages, and, in the end, irregular and illegal courses tend to override the law, and this in its tendency is destructive of the legal system.

One of the most serious things in connection with this disregard of the strict law and

usage is the loss of moral tone among both laity and clergy who do not strictly observe the law, for it involves a violation of their sacred vows taken when they deliberately agreed to submit to the system.

All may not have looked upon it that way simply because they have not reflected, but any one who will ponder the facts and carefully scan the situation must see that there cannot be violation of vows and disregard for law without loss of moral tone, which is a serious matter at any time, and especially in the Church of God.

But some one may say, Times have changed! but that does not right the wrong. Times may have changed, but that does not necessarily mean that things have improved. Times may have changed, indeed, but they may have changed for the worse, and surely there is something wrong with times that tolerate anything and everything and allow individuals to break the law with impunity and, perhaps, with a smile of approval.

If times change like that, they should be changed over again, for a change that means permitted violations of the law presages disaster rather than gives promise of genuine prosperity.

But the itinerant system with its appointing power has not changed. The system that was

is the system that is. The law of former days is the law of the present time, and the ministers and members of the present day have obligated themselves, and are now obligated as were the members and ministers of former generations.

If one remarks that we are alluding to the old, old system that belonged to the olden time, we answer: No, we speak of what was and what is, and it is for the Church to remember that the system as it was in the olden time is still the law at the present time.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church the law as to the itinerant system is precisely what it was in the early years, and as it was when incorporated in the Constitution of 1808.

But why, says one, should we be bound to-day by a constitution of more than a century ago?

The answer to that is, first, we are bound to obey a constitution as long as it legally exists, though it be many centuries old, and no matter how old it may be. This is recognized to be the case with the principles in the British Constitution, and so with the Constitution of the United States of America. Though it was made years before the Church constitution, it still is in force.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, however, as a matter of fact, the denomination is

not under the Constitution of 1808, but under the New Constitution adopted in 1900. It is, therefore, not under the old, old law, but under the new, new law of the present day, which law cannot be weakened by the charge of great antiquity.

But while the Church is under the constitution enacted by the present generation, in the matter of pastoral assignment it is precisely the same as it was in 1808 and from the beginning of the Church.

The old system, consequently, is the decision of the Church of the present time, and so recently reënacted that for any one to say that we should not be restricted by a law more than a century old is worse than child's play and shows ignorance of present-day facts. However, if it had not been reënacted, the old law still would be in force, but the old law is the present law, readopted only a few years ago, and, as the present law, demands present obedience. To say we should no longer obey the law, or that people should be permitted to disobey the law, is anarchy.

So to speak, every individual who comes into the Church reënacts the law and renews the system. Thus the ancient agreement, renewed every time a preacher is admitted into an Annual Conference, or a member joins the Church, still continues to be the law, old and

yet new, and remains in force in the law and is binding everywhere in the Church, in the North and the South, and in the East and the West, among the rich and the poor, and those in middle circumstances as well.

Such a law is not intended to be a dead letter. It should not be, for it is vital to the very existence of the Church. It is to be obeyed not simply by the ministry while the laity shall be exempt from its operations, or by the local churches while the preachers shall be free from its obligations, but all in the Church are to render equal obedience to the regulations which bind all for the benefit of all.

The tendency to disregard the obligations of the itinerant system, though far from being universal, nevertheless has taken on such proportions as to make it a positive peril. If permitted to go on, it will weaken, or destroy, the appointing power; it will work injury to both preachers and people; and, tending to destroy the system, it will work disaster to the Church. The time has come when the tendency should be checked and the legal system be permitted to work freely and fairly.

XI

THE CAUSE OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS

CERTAIN faulty conditions are apparent. Every condition has a cause. Then where may the cause of these faulty conditions be found? The defects are not essentially in the system itself. In the system are churches who need pastors; in the system are ministers who need churches; in the system is an appointing power that can designate pastors for churches and churches for pastors; and in the system is a voluntary agreement on the part of the people and on the part of the preachers to submit to any assignment or arrangement made by the appointing power, which appointing power is created and selected under and according to the law of the Church.

This system is simple and thorough, and, so far as the system itself is concerned, there is nothing to prevent its working perfectly.

Under it the pastor gets a charge and the church gets a pastor, so that the church is kept supplied with a minister and the preacher is kept in pastoral employment, and as all have agreed to accept the judgment of the appoint-

ing power, there is a guarantee of a peaceful outcome and of general satisfaction.

No machine should work more smoothly and satisfactorily than this scheme, for it is perfectly adapted to its purpose and should perfectly attain its intended end: namely, to provide the churches with pastors and to give each pastor a charge.

Yet the results are not absolutely perfect in the practice everywhere and at all times.

If, then, the system is not working perfectly —that is, according to its nature and intentions—the Church should ask: Why is it not working properly? Why does it not work out according to its purpose and its promise?

The fault is not in the system itself, for it is perfectly adapted to its end.

Then, if the fault is not in the system, it must be in the way the system is handled or managed. If the machine is calculated to produce a certain result and it does not secure the result, then there must be something wrong, not with the mechanism but with its management. The machine is interfered with or not properly handled.

The question then is not as to the nature of the system, but why the system is not working properly. Where shall we locate the cause? Has some one thrown extraneous matter into the mechanism? Who is or who are

responsible for imperfect results or for failure?

If the itinerant system with its appointive method of pastoral supply is seemingly working defectively, who are responsible for its apparent failure to work consistently and equitably? Of itself it is constructed so that it will be consistent and equitable in its action and in its results. If it does not always seem to be so, what is the reason?

It is plain that, if the system can work so as to perform what it promises, the difficulty must be with those who manage or mismanage it, or who interfere with its proper working.

The fault must, therefore, be in the ministry, the laity, or in the appointing power, or, it is possible, that in some degree it may be more or less in all three.

Are the laymen responsible for some of the results which may be regarded as unsatisfactory?

Are the ministers responsible for such failures as may exist?

Are the presiding elders, or district superintendents, or other officials, in any degree responsible?

Are the bishops, or other officers with appointing power, at any time or in any way responsible? That may seem a strange question, but since the question is propounded as

to other parties it seems only fair to ask: Are the bishops, or similar officers, upon whom the law lays the responsibility of fixing the appointments of the preachers, in any way responsible for a defective working of the system?

If there is failure on the part of presiding elders, or district superintendents, to really superintend, and they are practically superintended by those whose business is not to direct them, then they are to some extent responsible for some of the faulty conditions.

If a bishop sometimes fails to administer according to the intention of the system, then some of the responsibility rests upon him. Some are inclined to ask: Are circumstances making bishops timid? If so, that is as disastrous as for a general to lose his nerve in the midst of a battle.

Some years ago at the meeting of the supreme body of a certain denomination, when certain antagonistic movements were being made, one said: "I am afraid these things will tend to make a timid episcopacy." After a particular action in a similar body, a prominent minister sadly declared: "No bishop ever again will dare to do a difficult thing in administration." If denominational action makes a bishop suffer for right doing, or in any way takes courage from the appointing

power, then the Church would be responsible for the consequences, for if a cowardly episcopacy were created it would mean no episcopal superintendency, and would spell disaster for the denomination.

If, for the moment, we limit our view to the matter of disregarding the law and making arrangements and engagements between churches and preachers independently of the system, and ask who are responsible for introducing and continuing such a method, what would be the answer?

The answer must be:

First, and primarily, the responsibility rests upon a few laymen who belong to a few conspicuous churches;

Second, it rests upon some preachers who become parties to the preëngagements;

Third, it rests upon presiding elders, or district superintendents, who directly or indirectly encourage or permit practically binding agreements between preachers and people; and

Fourth, it would rest with the appointing power, if it allows its judgment to be coerced by the call-method or by any improper influence.

Should all these be found in a given case, then all these parties would share in the responsibility.

That the disturbance in the operation of the system is due primarily to a few influential laymen in prominent churches is a matter of common report, but it need not be assumed that such laymen have any evil intention or that they are possessed by a desire to injure anybody or anything.

It may be conceded that they are merely desirous of promoting the interests of their own local church, but the fact remains that when they make the preëngagement with a preacher and make their demand upon the appointing power for compliance with the illegal prearrangement, they are interfering with the natural working of the system. They are putting the supposed interest of the local church above the welfare of the general Church, they are standing against the rights of other churches and other ministers, and are making the equitable action of the appointing power exceedingly difficult and in instances making it practically impossible if there is a yielding to the demand.

It is also an assumption that a few local individuals can know the needs of the whole work and the merits and qualifications of all the ministers as well or better than those whose official duty it is to study and know all the churches and all the preachers.

Then the preacher who becomes a partici-

pant in the prearrangement is thinking of himself rather than the general interests of the whole Church. Probably he does not mean deliberately to interfere with the rights of others or to injure the working of the ecclesiastical mechanism, but by his preëngagement he does prejudice the rightful claim of other preachers to a fair consideration for that particular charge.

Such preachers who prefer to look after their own interests than to trust to the legally authorized appointing power are, in a sense, ignoring the rights of other ministers, and they are ignoring the claims of other churches who need their services, while they make the work of adjustment between all the preachers by the bishop, or the appointing power, so difficult as at times to practically compel injustice. When the day comes that he has no "call" and such a preacher has to stand aside for the irregularly "called," then he is the first to demand that the bishop shall exert his prerogative and force him into a place which he thinks he should have but to which he has not been "invited." Then he may begin to see how his former prearrangements interfered with the legitimate rights of others.

The presiding elder, or district superintendent, who tries to evade his own official responsibility by going around and working up calls

for certain preachers, who acts as though he existed simply to carry out the whims or wishes of a certain layman or group of laymen, and who imagines that he is not responsible for the interests of preachers who are not "called" and will even give as a reason for his lack of effort that the preacher "has no call," is a chief contributor to the improper working of the plan and largely accountable for chaotic conditions under a very perfect system. Both preachers and people should promptly take such an official to task and secure his removal from the position he fails to honour or understand.

It is one thing to ascertain and convey the wishes and needs of people and preachers, and quite a different thing to go contrary to the intention of the law, interfere with the rights of churches and pastors generally, and to prevent the proper operation of the system.

When lay officials, chagrined because they did not secure the man they selected, say, and perhaps say with vehemence: "We did not ask this man, we did not ask for him, and we will not take him, or we will not support him, or we will reduce the salary, or we will send him away at the end of the year," they are ignoring their agreement, violating the law of the Church, and helping to destroy the system.

So, when a preacher refuses to go to his

appointment, he is violating the law just as much as the church that says it will not receive the preacher who has been assigned to it.

In each case the system is not being respected, and both are in rebellion against the law they promised to obey.

Fortunately such instances are exceedingly rare, but if they do occur they tend to interfere with the equitable working of the appointive method.

Sometimes what may seem to be an unsatisfactory working of the system is due to imperfect representations as to men and places.

Another difficulty grows out of misapprehensions and, sometimes, misrepresentations of the administration, which make the impression that actions have been faulty and the adjustments unfortunate, when the fact is that the administration was exceedingly wise.

Now and then, it may be, some party concerned, through failure of memory or other cause, fails to accurately state the facts in regard to the making of appointments, and the circulated error causes misapprehension and dissatisfaction and the system is compelled to carry the blame.

Sometimes presiding elders have thus been misrepresented, and sometimes even bishops have suffered from the grossest misstatements

as to matters of fact, which, properly understood, were greatly to their credit.

Unfortunately there are some who are ever ready to accept such rumours and, with additions, to circulate them without giving the party criticized a chance to be heard.

These things, and others like them, are responsible for dissatisfaction among both preachers and people and tend to confuse judgment as to the system itself, when they are not in any sense due to the appointive system.

The system is not to be blamed for its faulty operation, for the system is calculated to work well and to the advantage of all concerned. If the trouble is with the improper way in which it is worked, then the thing to do is to correct the working. Wherever the fault lies, it should be quickly found and promptly corrected.

Some who are responsible more or less for unsatisfactory conditions have been indicated.

The parties should mend their ways and allow the legal system to work naturally and accomplish its intended purpose.

XII

SHOULD THE SYSTEM BE DESTROYED?

WOULD the abandonment of the appointive system of pastoral supply be better for the Church? Would it be an improvement to change the system so as to let the laymen and the ministers adjust the pastoral assignments among themselves?

Some seem to imagine that the present system could be so modified as that all churches and ministers who pleased could arrange for themselves and yet retain the present itinerant system with the appointing power.

That, however, would be an effort to combine the peculiarities of the settled pastorate with the itinerant system, but two contradictory methods cannot be worked together, neither can a mixed system with contradictory methods be worked as one system. Oil and water will not mix, and we must select one method and reject the other.

Suppose the two methods were worked together, what would be the probable result?

A few of the strongest churches might make

contracts with certain more or less conspicuous preachers, but the mass of the churches and the most of the ministers would probably fail to come to an agreement, and this would be quite likely with the poorer churches and the less popular or less known preachers. Then the task of the appointing power would be to adjust the "lefts." But what preacher would like to be classed as one of the lefts, and what church would want to be known as a church that no minister would have?

This would mean the loss of the supervisional, superintending, and directive method of the itinerant system, and the introduction of a haphazard method of chance adjustments based on local and individual, and even selfish, desires, and the work of the appointing power would be a farce without even the element of humour.

It would be humiliating to the preacher, for he would practically be compelled to dicker on a commercial basis or to be a beggar for a place, and subject him to the mortification of a rejected suitor.

Suppose there was no appointing power and the pastoral adjustments were left to the people and preachers to adjust among themselves as best they could, would that make it any better for the churches and the ministers?

The answer is right at hand, for that method

has been tested in various denominations and the results are well known. The church hunts for a minister, and the minister hunts for a church. Both are seekers and solicitors. Now and then the church finds the right man who is willing to accept the proffer, but frequently the church does not find the right man who is willing to accept. Now and then the minister finds the right church that is willing to have him, but very frequently he finds that the right church, as he deems it, refuses to have him.

The seeking takes time, and as a consequence of various difficulties, churches are for a long time without regular pastors, and for long periods ministers are without charges and without support. In the meantime, the churches suffer from lack of pastoral care, and the professional reputation and popularity of the waiting preachers steadily deteriorates. Turn to any denomination where this method is used and there will be found large numbers of churches with vacant pulpits and hosts of preachers without pastoral charges.

Even with these denominations, where the church and the minister are popularly supposed to be independent among themselves and to be independent of any higher body, the facts show that there is a superior authority that can refuse to sanction the arrangement

between the church and the minister, and which has refused to recognize the call to the minister or the wish of the pastor to go to a particular church; and, what is more, this superior authority can refuse to dissolve the relation existing between a congregation and a pastor, so that a church that wishes to get rid of its preacher may be prevented from doing so, and the pastor who wishes to get away from his church may be ordered to stay where he is. In such bodies the idea of the absolute independence of the local church and of the minister is a deceptive myth.

But suppose the churches and the ministers did have absolute independence, and the church could get rid of the pastor at its pleasure and get any one it pleased, and, on the other hand, the preacher could leave a charge when he wished to and have liberty to seek another place, would the preachers fare any better and would the churches be better served?

The demonstration can be found in many directions, and the facts prove that the average minister would fare very much worse than if he was in the itinerant system, and even the exceptional few would be involved in uncertainty.

As for the average church, it certainly would not be better supplied than in the appointive

system, which gives every charge a pastor, and in the ordinary course keeps the church continuously supplied with pastors, and that without an interval of a minute, for at the Annual Conference the moment one pastor is removed another takes his place.

With freedom to choose or reject on the part of the church or the preacher, there would always be uncertainty even up to the last moment.

Under the mutual agreement method the preachers would, in all equity, have the right to seek and the right to refuse a charge, and, conversely, the churches would have a right to reject ministers who might propose or be proposed. But, while the minister would have the right to reject an invitation, he would not have the power to choose a church and make himself the pastor; and so, on the other hand, while the church would have a right to seek a minister, it would not have power to compel him to accept its pastorate.

There might be, doubtless would be, as the past proves, conflicting desires between ministers and churches, which would result in a struggle between the churches, between the ministers and churches, and naturally between ministers themselves.

The consequence would be many churches vacant and suffering from lack of pastoral

care, and many ministers without pastoral charge and suffering from lack of financial support.

Many ministers would stand idly in the market-place waiting for some church to hire them, and continue standing until, weary and heart-sore the collapse would come, and that would be the case if the preacher had the right both to choose and to refuse, for the people could, and would, when they desired, assert the power to reject the preacher.

Even with occasional inconsistencies in the working of the itinerant system, the appointive method of making pastoral assignments is far better for the average minister and the average church, and, taking it altogether, it is much better for all the churches and all the ministers.

The church is sure of a pastor, and the preacher is sure of a place, and the general Church is infinitely better looked after than could possibly be the case where people and preachers tried to make adjustments for themselves.

There is also an equal, indeed we may say a superior, chance, under the appointive plan, for the minister of ability to rise in his profession. Even young men rise to eminence in the itinerancy.

As an effective system for keeping pulpits

supplied with preachers and ministers provided with churches, there is nothing equal to the itinerant and appointive system in all Protestantism. This is evident from the very nature of the system and from a comparison of actual results.

As to the quality of the supply, as to the fitness of the churches, and the practical merit of the ministers, a comparison will show that the appointive system shows better results than any other method, for those who make the appointments are better qualified to make adjustments, as they have a general knowledge of the churches and the ministers and, from personal observation and information gathered from others, they have a broader knowledge of churches and pastors than an individual church or an individual preacher could possibly have. No president, or governor, or judge could have more accurate knowledge in the matter of appointments than such an ecclesiastical appointing officer.

Then in the itinerant appointive system there is a peculiar solidarity and something that calls out the heroic in the ministry. The preacher enters into it as a soldier joins the army, submitting to authority to be used for the furtherance of a great cause. The soldier obeys orders even if it is at the risk of his life, and the minister goes where he is sent,

no matter what may be the personal cost. Both offered for service and both leave the direction of that service to official superiors, and in both is the heroic element. In such a system there is an *esprit de corps* that cannot be found under a system in which the individual minister and the local church are practically isolated and start out on an independent hunt, the one for a pastor and the other for a place. The heroic and self-sacrificing quality that belongs to this system leads preachers and people to sink personal wishes in the desire for the general good and in behalf of the greatest present need.

In the Episcopal Address of 1912, already quoted, occurs the following:

"As we review the outstanding features of Itinerancy in its days of glorious conquest, we freely confess that the physical hardships and deprivations of our ministry to-day, except on the frontier, are much less than formerly. . . .

"Very few pastors go to new appointments without some knowledge of what their support will be—so much less therefore the excuse for preliminary negotiations. Appointments are still made and read at the Conferences. But there is not the same call for the *daring*, the *venture* of faith, the high courage that tells of *heroic* sacrifice, save in the one remaining

significant vow of obedience to the appointing power. There are still noble examples of this, but its spirit is constantly impaired by the growing practice of preliminary negotiations."

Nevertheless, there are manifestations of heroism even in the old and densely settled localities, as, for example, when a minister goes to a broken-down church and ventures upon a forlorn hope, or remains in or goes to a weak or struggling church because it needs him. The men who undertake the hard things and keep at the hard work are the heroes.

There still are men who trust to the appointing power and go like brave soldiers wherever they are sent, glad they do not have to take the responsibility of choosing their field of work, and thankful for the providential opportunity to toil for the Church and the Divine Master.

So there are churches that do not attempt to choose their own pastors, but are thankful that they are relieved of that responsibility, and who receive the appointed pastors as God-sent men.

To the question, Will the destruction of the present itinerant appointive system be better for the people and the preachers? the answer must be in the negative. To the question, Will it be better for the preachers, the people, and

the general interests of the Church to substitute a method by which the people and the preachers among themselves, and without any superior appointing power, shall make the pastoral assignments? the reply must be an emphatic no.

XIII

THE MINISTER IN THE SYSTEM

THE minister in this system occupies a peculiarly delicate position. The minister is in the system as is no one else. In a sense, the minister, while he is the most important, is at the same time the weakest factor in the system, and as such needs the greatest help.

The preacher-pastor has more at stake than any other person who is a part of the system. No layman, for example, takes such a risk as does the minister who is subject to pastoral appointment.

The minister must go where he is sent, though there is nothing attractive about the place and nothing socially or intellectually congenial about the people.

The minister must take what the people please to give him in the way of financial support, and, if they do not pay what they promise, he cannot compel payment of a single dollar after he has left the charge.

He takes a risk not only for himself, but also for his family. He lays himself, his fam-

ily, and all his earthly prospects on the altar of the Church.

This cannot be said, in the same sense, of any lay member. No layman does as much. The layman's business and financial support, or his health or that of his family, are not risked by his church membership, but the minister risks practically everything for himself and for his wife and children, and possibly for others connected with him.

If the minister in the system risks so much, he is entitled to special consideration by the Church. Instead of his interests being the last to be considered, they should generally be the first and the last.

If the minister is bound by the rigid system, then he has a right to demand that all others in the system shall be as strictly bound, shall correspondingly conform to the same law, and as completely keep their part of the contract.

If he is compelled to go where he is sent, and the people are not going to observe their serious and voluntary obligation to receive and support him, then of all ministers he is most miserable, for men in other ministries are conceded some right of choice, and frequently a veto power in the rejection of a place.

Therefore, we say that in a very special

sense the preacher is the weakest factor in the system, at least as far as caring for himself is concerned, and consequently something must be done for him by others, somebody must take care of him, the churches must sympathetically consider his risks and sacrifices, and the authorities, and particularly the appointing power, must give the preacher's interests particular attention, as he is not in position to take care of himself.

Hence, the system when fairly operated comes to his assistance and makes it the duty of the supervising officers and the appointing power to see that every preacher has a fair chance and receives an equitable appointment in view of his merit and the equitable rights of other ministers who are involved, and of the real needs of the work.

Certain things, therefore, the minister has a right to expect, and a right to demand. He has a right to insist that the system shall be worked consistently, according to its intention and promise, and that always it shall treat him justly, so that as long as he does good and faithful work it shall care for him fairly, and not compel him to look out for himself as though there was no appointive system. He has a right to expect that all he need do is to be devoted to his duty where he is, and have no anxiety as to the future, know-

ing that when the proper period arrives for fixing the appointments the appointing authority will properly place him regardless of call or no call, and that his interests will not be imperilled by outside efforts to preëmpt preachers or control pastoral adjustments.

As one of the contracting parties, and particularly as having most at stake, he has a right to insist that the terms of the contract shall be met by the parties of the other part; and the fair-minded of the party of the other part will admit the propriety of the demand that they shall conform.

When the adjustment is made, the minister has a right to expect from the laity loyalty to the system and cordial acquiescence in the appointment. So he has a right to expect from his brother ministers fair treatment and non-interference with the making of his appointment, and especially has he a right to demand that there shall be no misrepresentation or suppressed information, and, if anything is alleged to his detriment, that he shall have a fair chance to defend himself.

The minister has a right to expect that the presiding elder, or district superintendent, shall actually superintend and not be superintended by either preachers or people, and particularly by a few.

He has a right to expect that the presiding

elder shall have a broad policy and a consistent plan of action.

Likewise, he has a right to expect that the bishop shall be bishop and administer intelligently, judiciously, equitably, and courageously, for without that the preacher has no certainty of fair treatment.

If the laymen are to choose or elect, formally or informally, pastors for the local churches, while the minister has no right to choose or refuse, and he has no one to appeal to but the laity in the local church, what advantage has a minister in the itinerant system over a minister in any so-called "settled pastorate"?

If the ministers are, so to speak, to be stood up in a row, and laymen are to look them over and pick out those they like and reject the rest, and the appointing power is simply to agree to or confirm such selection, what certainty has the minister in the itinerant system of getting his right place any more than a minister in a settled pastorate where there is no bishop, or appointing power, with the authority and duty of assigning preachers to pastoral charges?

Every minister in the appointive system has a right to expect something better than to be stood up upon a block and be subject to the indignity of inspection and rejection by par-

ties who, under the law of the Church, are without authority to assign preachers to pastoral charges or to decide who shall or shall not go to a particular church.

If the pastor is to be picked out according to the pleasure of some laymen, or any other persons, who cannot have a thorough knowledge of all the ministers and their work, and who have no legal authority in the premises, while the minister has no right to choose or refuse a place, what freedom has he?

A freedom that works only one way and on one side is no freedom at all. A freedom only to accept or go to the place, but not to choose or reject, is not freedom, but compulsion. If a church can select or reject the preacher, and the minister cannot select or reject the church, then the minister has no liberty whatsoever in the matter. In a mutual system, consistently worked, if the one side has no option the other side should have no option. If the one is bound by the mutual contract, the other is equally bound.

Under the system the minister has just as much right to choose the charge as the church has to select its pastor; and, in equity, when the wish of the local church determines who shall be its pastor, then the wish of the preacher should determine what church he shall have.

But, according to the system and the law, neither church nor minister has the power of determination. Each may have representation of wishes, but the decision is with the appointing authority, which is presumed to be informed, disinterested, and impartial, and when that authority decides all parties are to acquiesce in the decision, the minister taking his assignment and the charge accepting its pastor.

As the minister has, individually, most at stake, naturally he should be most interested. While he has a right to demand that others honour the contract, he himself should conform to its terms.

Presiding elders and bishops should carry out the law in the interest of the preachers and the churches, and loyal laymen should insist that the system be operated according to the law, in a consistent and equitable manner, so that both ministers and churches shall be fully protected and fairly treated.

Those under appointment must feel reasonably sure that they will be fairly provided for when the time for another assignment arrives. Otherwise, the preacher's peace will be disturbed and he will not be able to do his best work, or doing it he will do it at the expense of nervous energy which, being exhausted, will exhaust him.

It should be repeated that the pastor is the most important person in the local church, and that he must be protected and given a fair chance.

The Church must uphold the dignity of the ministry, must preserve the minister's self-respecting spirit, and must permit him to have a certain freedom of action.

The minister should not feel—and he must not be made to feel—that he must obey the will of a particular man, or of a few individuals in the local church, or else get out, but he should feel—and be made to feel—that back of him is a mighty system that will sustain and maintain him as long as he properly conducts himself according to the Discipline of the Church and performs good work as a preacher and pastor. This does not mean that the preacher is always to receive the choice churches. The intelligent and fair-minded minister does not expect the system to do that under all circumstances, but he expects equitable treatment.

If a preacher knows he has had a fair representation and a fair consideration, and that there has been a candid effort to decide equitably as between him and others and in view of the work done and to be done, the preacher can, and will, accept the adjustment, though the appointment be disappointing, and he will

go submissively and even cheerfully to his work, as many a preacher has done many a time. It is when he thinks that these fair conditions did not exist that the pinch comes and wrings his heart.

The preacher must not be regarded as a hireling, to be employed and discharged at the pleasure of a few in the local church. He is more than a soldier ready to obey orders and to sacrifice himself for a cause. He is a Man of God, called of God to preach the Word of God, and a minister of our Lord Jesus Christ to minister in holy things, ready to sacrifice himself in Christ's cause, but not to be sacrificed by an unthinking or unfeeling few who have no right, either moral or legal, to sacrifice him.

The pastor must receive proper consideration in the matter of appointments, and in the appointment the pastor must receive proper treatment, or both churches and pastors will suffer most severely.

The Church must be respectful to, and regardful of the interests of, its ministers, or it will suffer in the tone of the ministry and the character of pastoral work.

The Church cannot afford to permit its ministers to receive anything less than the most careful Christian consideration, for disrespect for the ministry involves disrespect for God's

Church and sacred things, and creates an atmosphere of irreverence that deteriorates the entire Church and prevents its spiritual uplift.

The church must keep in mind the minister's most delicate position in the appointive system. It should remember how much he risks for himself and his family, and in view of these facts regard him with sympathy and render him sincere support.

The system itself guarantees him equitable treatment, and the Church should see to it that the minister's rights are not trampled upon, but that they are tenderly and faithfully protected.

XIV

THE EFFECT OF INCONSISTENT WORKING

A NUMBER of evil results may be anticipated if the itinerant and appointive system is not administered consistently in harmony with its requirements. In the first place, it will neutralize and ultimately destroy the system of episcopal supervision, for the general superintendency is exercised mainly in the making of appointments, for if the pastoral adjustments are to be arranged by others the tendency will be to regard episcopal action as unnecessary, and from disuse it will pass on to destruction, at least as a real supervisional agency.

Then, when the power of general superintendency passes away, in fact or form, or both, that will be the destruction of connectionalism and the unity of the denomination, for it is the episcopal oversight and particularly the power of appointment more than anything else that binds the churches and ministers together.

Destroy this supervisory and appointive

power, or destroy it in practice, and the Church would cease to be the Church as presented in its constitution, its statute law, and its history.

In the second place, it will mean a serious loss of spirit in the ministry, for—with the uncertainties and probable inequities in the matter of pastoral assignments, because of the lack of an effective appointing power, which would give a consistent administration—instead of a self-respecting and independent body of ministers such as the Church has had, the tendency would be degenerative and would develop a timid and even a truckling spirit on the part of the preachers who would be subject to appointment nominally to a legal power which is practically prevented from doing what the law says it shall do.

In that case the temptation would be to bow obsequiously to those who seem to possess the real power rather than to the legally constituted appointing power.

As long as the preachers trust in the appointing power, which really administers, there is likely to be a manly and independent ministry, but, when a mixed and inconsistent system is used, the increased uncertainties in practice will cause the ministers themselves to be uncertain.

In the third place, unless the system is per-

mitted to work freely and fairly at all times, pastors will be weakened and injured in many ways in the management of the local churches.

The pastor is to be the leader in his church, but he cannot lead if he is dominated by those he should lead; and when he knows that he owes his place to the very people over whom he is pastor, and feels that his tenure in the church may be terminated on the whim or decree, secret or otherwise, of one or a few in the local church, he will probably fear to take a decided stand—or, at least, that will be the temptation. Where the pastor knows that his assignment is, both legally and actually, due to a superior appointing power, his relation to the church and his attitude in the church are very different and more helpful to him, while he can be more helpful to the church.

In the fourth place, unless the system is worked consistently, so that the ministers shall feel that they can depend upon it always to do the equitable thing for them, it will lead to a loss of high-spirited and greatly needed men from its ministry.

Even now they are becoming more difficult to get and keep, partly because of a growing uncertainty and an apprehensive feeling in not a few minds.

If they feel they cannot rely upon its

equitable working, such ministers will become discouraged and will be driven out of the denomination.

The system itself is all right, but, unless it is so worked that it does something for them as well as with them, such high-toned men will go out before their spirits are broken, even if they fare no better elsewhere. Hence, every minister must be convinced that the system will be permitted to operate consistently with itself and that the managers of the system will care for him equitably, call or no call.

In the fifth place, if the system is not properly worked, the laity and the local churches, as well as the denomination generally, will suffer from the loss of able preachers and the broken spirit of many who remain, and many laymen themselves will lose respect for a Church that does not maintain its own law.

To avoid these and other evil consequences, the system must be worked consistently, fully, and fairly.

The system cannot work well unless it is worked consistently, and naturally, according to the intention for which it was constructed.

When a machine is made to work in a particular way, the operator must conform to the method for which the machine was made. To force the machine to work in some other

way produces friction and will break the mechanism into pieces or unfit it for its legitimate purpose. If the running be clogged here and there, if a bolt here and there be taken out, or if a clamp is placed on some part of the mechanism so that the part cannot perform its intended purpose, the machinery cannot continue to do its work well, and ultimately will be ruined, and then it would be the height of foolishness to blame the result on the mechanism, for the fault was with those who interfered with the mechanism and improperly operated the machine.

So the ecclesiastical system as to pastoral assignment is constructed to work in a given way, and all agree that it shall be worked in that way: namely, that the ministers shall not determine their own places and that the places shall not determine their own pastors, and that while requests may be presented and reasons be given by one side or the other why an appointment should or should not be made, the final decision shall be left to an arbiter and supervisor called a bishop, or an appointing power, as in the nation decisions and appointments are left to judges, governors, and presidents, and that, when the decision or appointment has been made, all parties will loyally acquiesce.

This is to be insisted upon and the ecclesi-

astical mechanism must be worked according to its intention or it cannot produce satisfactory results. It must be managed properly or it will be ruined, and ministers and churches will share in the ruin.

XV

MAKING ASSIGNMENTS

FEW understand the process of making appointments. Laymen generally do not, and the average preacher knows little more, and ministers called to exercise or share in appointment-making have usually been surprised to find how many things have to be considered and to perceive how the process works out.

Many, indeed, have an idea that a bishop at the beginning of an Annual Conference knows, or should know, just what will be done in every particular case, but, if that is so, why should it be necessary to take about a week during the conference session for the consideration of the churches and the preachers and for the study of adjustments so that there will be the right result? It is absurd to suppose that a bishop can know before he begins the work of adjusting or that he can tell the outcome before he has completed the work of adjustment.

The problem before the appointing power is to supply the churches with pastors and the

pastors with charges, and to do it so that each church will receive a preacher adapted to its needs and so that each minister shall have due recognition for his ability and service and be sent to the place for which he is best adapted.

Supposing a concrete case: a bishop has under consideration a conference containing two hundred churches and two hundred ministers, one minister for each church and one charge for each minister. They could all be changed around and each preacher would have a church and each church a pastor. That would be an adjustment, but probably not a right one, for the churches differ in their conditions and needs and the preachers vary in their ability, experience, and adaptability. So the problem is to find the pastor who will best meet the need of the local church, and the church that will best fit the minister with his peculiar qualities.

In the itinerancy all these preachers are movable, but some of them should not be moved at that time, because the work needs them and there is no better reason for placing them elsewhere. That, for the time being at least, eliminates so many ministers and so many churches from the calculation, and, for the time, the problem is limited to the remaining charges and preachers.

Here, again, different classes are to be

found in the remainder. Some preachers must move and some churches must have a change of pastors, so it is deemed, not necessarily because of any complaint against the church or against the pastor, but, it may be, because of special needs of the church or of the preacher.

Then there is another class composed of churches where a change could be made without disadvantage, and at the same time there is a proportion of preachers who may be moved without injury to the work.

With these general conditions in view, the appointing power is to supply churches with the right men, and to adjust men to the right churches.

The making of appointments is an art, and a fine art. It should not be a haphazard thing. It involves philosophic principles, knowledge of men and places, and sound judgments as to fitness of men, with a steady preservation of balances.

It is, therefore, impossible for a bishop to say offhand at the beginning of his work what the appointments will be. As the process goes on he may be compelled to correct his own intention from time to time because new facts have been presented and new light has dawned upon the bishop, or appointing power.

He must consider all cases before he can know what to do with any. In all fairness, strictly speaking, he cannot positively announce any appointment until he has studied all the appointments. Then a fair balance must be preserved between all parties so as to avoid injustice to any one. What would be agreeable in one instance might be found to work injury in another, and then an attempt must be made to find a way of arranging the appointments so that justice will be done in each and every case. Thus the work of making appointments is a process of adjusting and readjusting, with constant shifting in the effort to find and preserve a fair balance between all, both ministers and churches, and that shifting may go on to the very end. Hence the old adage: "No appointment is made until every appointment is made."

So no bishop should decide any case positively until he has studied all cases and is prepared to decide all, because what may seem a proper appointment one day may be so modified by the study of other men and other charges the next day as to make it appear a very improper assignment in view of the rights of other preachers and other places. So the bishop cannot be prepared to finally fix any one appointment until he has gone over all and found how the equities can be respected in each

and every case and a fair balance can be preserved.

New information may be coming in from day to day and new light may come at the last moment before the reading of the appointments which will necessitate a shift, and even at that late moment the readjustment should be made to prevent an injustice to some individual or church or an unwise arrangement somewhere, or it may be to improve what were reasonably good adjustments.

Thus the shifting may go on, and should go on to the very end if the appointments can be bettered. As long as any time remains, the appointing power must not be limited by anything but the facts that come from reliable sources.

A bishop comes to a conference to fix the appointments. He has probably received much information before he came, but he comes with an open mind. He must bring an open mind, for there may yet be additional information that should qualify what he has already received.

He comes without prejudice against any preacher or any church and his only purpose is to do what will promote the interest of God's Church by making judicious selections of pastors for the several churches and to deal justly with the preachers. He is to have the

foresight of a general managing a campaign and the impartiality of a judge hearing a most important case.

The bishop may have general, and even very exact, knowledge of the ministers and the churches, but he welcomes whatever pertinent information others can give. He surrounds himself with his official advisers, and is in almost constant touch with them, and they, who have visited the churches time and again during the year and are familiar with the ability, work, and characteristics of the preachers, give him detailed information in each and every case, and together, and over and over again, they discuss the different cases and the propositions, possibilities, and probabilities bearing on each one.

Further, the bishop invites both ministers and laymen to call on him, or communicate with him, and thus encouraged preachers tell him what is in their heart, and the people give him suggestions from their point of view. Still further, the bishop independently seeks information from various parties directly or indirectly, and so gains knowledge that may be added to and may qualify even that he has received from his cabinet of official advisers.

To his advisers the bishop may say: "I notice that Doctor Smith has been quite a number of years at such a church; should he re-

main or should he move?" Perhaps they reply, "He should move at this time." To this the bishop says, "Why?" and draws out the reasons given in support of the proposition. If the reasons seem well-founded, the bishop may ask: "If Doctor Smith is moved, who is the proper and best man to take his place?" The answer may be that "Doctor Brown is the best." The bishop draws out the reasons for this opinion. If they seem convincing, the bishop may say: "I notice that Doctor Brown is getting only half as much salary as Doctor Smith receives. Why should Doctor Brown be given such an advance rather than any other minister? Why should he be preferred over other worthy men?" Reasons may be given, and the bishop may say: "Well, if Doctor Brown is placed at the church Doctor Smith now has, where can Doctor Smith go?" The answer may be: "We do not know. We have no place for Doctor Smith." To this a wise bishop may say: "In that case, Doctor Smith will stay where he is until a proper place is found for him."

A judicious bishop will never let a minister, during the process of making the appointments, "hang in the air," or be "on the floating list," as it used to be phrased. That is too dangerous, for if men are "afloat" or "hung in the air," and the bishop goes on

making the adjustments, the places will be filled up and no adequate places will remain, and the men who have been "passed for the time being" may be crushed or practically squeezed out, because at the end there may be, or seem to be, insufficient time, when the Conference is waiting to adjourn, to break up many adjustments to accommodate them.

The wise bishop knows that the only safe way is to always keep every preacher down for some charge and always for an equitable place, though he may be shifted a number of times. This method tends to preserve the balance, for the bishop tries to put him in as good or a better place and thus to prevent him from being unjustly dropped.

This method of keeping each preacher down somewhere all the time also keeps the list in order, so that all the time every preacher has a place and every church has a pastor, and the bishop could read the appointments at any moment.

Then a preacher might be proposed for a particular church. Perhaps it would be said he would be very satisfactory to that congregation, but, it might be objected, that the church where he is or some other church needs him more, and the question of his assignment is discussed pro and con, and perhaps it is finally decided that the church where he is

should not be injured by taking him away, or that a third church needed him most of all. Then, again, there might be a case where it was deemed wise to send a minister to the church for which he had been suggested because he was such a perfect fit, because the church really needed him, and because in sending him no injustice would be done any other church or any other preacher.

On the paper under his eye the bishop may work out the adjustments like a mathematical problem, and constantly have in sight the comparative suggestions, and be able to tell whether they do or do not make an equitable balance. If they do not properly equalize, he should work at it until, if possible, a fair balance between the preachers and the churches does appear, and, if the working of the system is not interfered with, an equitable balance can be found.

With the names of the ministers and churches, the salaries, and the years of service he can study and restudy, and shift and reshift, until the best possible and right adjustment can be found, and this will be determined not by wish or pressure, but by need and merit—the need of the work and the merit of the man.

It is possible also for the bishop to keep a daily written record as the adjusting process

progresses, so that he can turn back and tell the status of the work on any given day and tell what was proposed and what was done.

With this process going on, even a stranger bishop can in a few days, possibly three or four, get a very detailed and comparatively complete knowledge of the preachers and churches in a Conference and in a week or less be prepared, with the aid he has received, to make a good and equitable adjustment.

The bishop and his cabinet, so to speak, form a board of arbitration, and in this board the bishop is the chief and deciding arbiter, and, after hearing the representations from all sides, the bishop is just as competent to make a right and righteous decision as a judge on the bench, the governor of a commonwealth, or the president of a republic.

But all this implies, and requires, that the bishop shall be free to decide each case on its own merits, and not be trammelled by pre-engagements between preachers and people, or by influential demands, or tacit commands. In other words, working freely according to the legal system, a judicious bishop, with suggestions from any source, lay or clerical, can reach a fair result.

XVI

THE SYSTEM MUST BE MAINTAINED

IT must not be supposed, notwithstanding all that has been said, that the old system, which also is the present system in the law, has been abandoned by everybody, or even generally, or that anybody is proposing to change the law.

On the contrary, it continues as to the vast majority of the ministers, and as to most of the churches, but, if ten per cent. disregard the system, they interfere with its right working and with the rights of the remaining ninety per cent. of the churches and preachers, and their illegal example tends to poison the minds of others and to break down the law-abiding spirit.

Facts show that this is the result, for those who used to disregard the law were possibly two or three cases in a large Conference, but latterly the instances have become more numerous, or there is a trend in that direction, and, if these tendencies are permitted to go on much longer, the system will be doomed and nothing so good can take its place.

As has been shown, there is no necessity for any inconsistency in the working of the system, and, if ninety-five per cent. of the churches do conform, and ninety-five per cent. or more of the ministers do very fully conform, then all others can conform, and there is no need for destroying or modifying the system.

It is also plain that the Church is not likely to change the law simply because a very few wish to escape its restraints.

The system can, and must, be sustained. The mass of the preachers want it, millions of members want it, and the best interests of the Church require it.

No, it has not utterly and hopelessly disappeared. It still works, though not perfectly everywhere, and tens of thousand of preachers, and millions of members are loyal and ready to stand by the law, and they can overcome the lawless and anarchistic element which here and there shows itself in the Church as well as in the State.

The system must be restored to its legitimate condition everywhere, and it must be worked consistently everywhere.

The system can be worked consistently and it must be so operated. The welfare of the denomination requires it, and it is the only equitable thing to do as long as the system is a part of the economy of the Church.

It must be worked fairly according to its intention, or else it must be broken up and the minister be left free to choose his place and make the best terms he can, and the Church be left to shift for itself.

All must obey the law—the laity and clergy alike—or the preacher must have liberty to refuse a place and take his risk without losing his ministerial standing or subjecting himself to severe discipline. In that case churches would be without pastors and preachers would be without places, for ministers would refuse many a charge to which they now go and churches would reject ministers they now accept.

The system must be maintained because of its success in keeping churches supplied with pastors. No other system is equal to it in this regard. It supplies the churches at regular times, and, in case of an emergency, at irregular times, and at the shortest notice, and so thoroughly is this done that practically every church always has a pastor, and should a pastor die or the pulpit become vacant for a day the presiding elder automatically takes charge until another pastor is appointed. No other system cares for the local church like the itinerant appointive system.

The system must be maintained for the good of the ministry, for no other system can do

as well for the preacher in giving him employment. For every preacher there is a place, and when he moves from one charge there is another for him. No other system in Protestantism thus provides for its preachers. With this system the minister is sure of work and a place to perform it, while under any other system ministers are without any charge and with aggravating uncertainty anxiously look into the future while they are without salaries to support their families. In this system there is always some support.

Some persons may allege that the system has faults and imagine that the system has defects, but generally these are not defects in the system but faults in the manner of working it; but, for the sake of the argument, let it be admitted that it is not absolutely perfect, nevertheless we ask where will you find a better system in its practical outcome?

On the average, even in these latter and less consistent days, it has done more than fairly well. As Shakespeare says, it has done "excellently well," and proven itself to be the best of all the systems in Protestantism.

It has kept pulpits supplied with preachers, it has provided its ministers with churches, and, worked according to its intention, it is calculated to always do well both for preachers and people, and able to demonstrate its superi-

ority to all other methods of pulpit supply.

The greatest success of the churches has been under this itinerant system, with its method of making appointments. The denominations which have used it have outstripped all others, and the bodies which have employed it have had their greatest successes when they have most strictly conformed to its legal requirements. It is the system that gave a marvellous growth and success to the Methodist Episcopal Church and kindred bodies, and that this was the cause may be seen from the fact that the rate of progress in the Church diminishes in proportion to the faultiness of its operation.

Because of the inherent value of the system, because of what it has done, and because nothing superior or equal to it can be put in its place, it should be maintained.

Further, this system of pastoral supply is just as well adapted to the present time as to the past. The conditions are essentially the same. There are churches and there are ministers, and the churches need pastors and the preachers need pastoral charges. So the old problem is the present problem—how to supply churches with pastors and provide ministers with pastorates. What the system has done in the past it can do now, and will be able to do in the future.

XVII

WHO SHOULD MAINTAIN THE SYSTEM?

AS the system should be maintained and worked according to the plan so that all will be justly treated and all be benefited by it, the question now is: Upon whom rests the responsibility of sustaining it?

In the first place, the people should maintain it because not only is it the law which each member solemnly promised to obey, but also because of the great advantage it is to the local churches, as the system supplies each charge with a pastor and protects every church from being sacrificed for some other church by placing all the churches on an equality and considering the actual and relative needs of all.

In the second place, it should be sustained by the ministers, because it constantly cares for each and all of them, assuring a charge for every one, giving a fresh and comparative consideration of each man from time to time, and endeavouring to give the preacher the place where he is needed and for which he is fitted.

Of all persons in the Church, the preacher particularly should stand by the system and not be tempted by any temporary advantage to countenance anything that would tend to disturb its proper operation or weaken its power to accomplish its legitimate purpose.

In the third place, the system should be strictly sustained by those associated with the appointing power. The presiding elders supervising both pastors and churches, and standing between them and the power that actually fixes the appointments, should not encourage any illegality or irregularity, and should come to the time for making the adjustments without any entangling arrangements, but with all possible information to help in the final adjustment.

But, above all, the appointing power should rigidly maintain the law which is intended to insure equal protection and benefit to all.

The last person to depart from the system, or to encourage or even tolerate any divergence on the part of others, either the preacher or the people, is the bishop. He should frown upon any attempt of this character, for if he did not he would be violating his solemn obligation to maintain and execute the law, and at the same time he would be interfering with the equities involved in the system and become

a party to injustice toward some church or some preacher.

He must come to his work of adjustment without entanglement and with absolute impartiality, and when he comes to the actual making of the appointments he must be perfectly free to send any preacher to any church as may be most judicious in view of the fullest and final information.

Is it asked: Who should check the tendency away from the system?

The answer is:

First, the intelligent and conscientious layman. He should file his objections to the irregular and illegal methods and refuse to participate in them.

Second, intelligent and conscientious ministers should discountenance these destructive movements and take no part in them either positively or passively, even when they seem to be to their own personal advantage.

Some ministers because of certain popular qualities they possess seem naturally to be desired. This is spontaneous and is very different from the demand that is manufactured. Instances of the manufactured "call" have been found which reflect little credit on the parties concerned.

The minister who works up a call, or has his friends do it for him, and so shuts out fair

and free consideration of his brother ministers who might have been thought of, and who should be thought of, by the appointing power, does a more than questionable thing for one who is in a mutual brotherhood. Then when it comes to the end and the preacher practically or actually insists that the appointing power shall regard only him for the place because he has the "call," when the appointing power must also consider the claims of others, may be regarded as a piece of unbrotherly and lawless selfishness. This is breaking down the system the minister should maintain.

Third, presiding elders, or district superintendents, should not only refrain from promoting such methods, but should also discourage and oppose them, though the methods might seem to relieve them of some responsibility in the matter of recommendation of men for places.

Fourth, the bishop, or appointing power, should refuse to encourage or tolerate the pre-engagement and quasi-elective process, and should earnestly stand against any attempt to usurp appointing power, and should refuse to allow such "direct negotiations" or pre-arrangements to interfere with the work of pastoral adjustments.

The bishop naturally wants to carry out the law and do the best thing, and, when he does

so, he should not be criticised but sustained. The illegal critic is the one who should be censured.

For laymen or ministers to demand that the bishop shall do less than his whole duty to the whole Church and the entire ministry, by favouring one church or one minister, at the sacrifice of other charges and other preachers, and so ignore the equities as related to all, is to ask him to do what is contrary to the law, contrary to the intention of his election, and contrary to his solemn vow.

So to put him in trying positions where, if he does the right and brave thing, it means he must suffer from the dissatisfaction of disappointed parties and the antagonism of those with little conscience, is doing violence to the principles of righteousness.

Both laymen and ministers should stand by the law of the Church.

The responsibility is with the entire Church, and all in the Church should maintain the system as made by law and honoured by usage.

XVIII

THE APPOINTING POWER MUST BE UNTRAMMELLED

THE freedom of the appointing power must be respected and sustained by all. To begin, the bishop must not bind himself in advance so that he is not perfectly free to do what seems right later, and at the very last moment, in view of new light and the necessity of preserving equitable balances between all the preachers and all the people. Thus he must not make any previous promises that will bind him or that may lead others to think that he has pledged himself to the making of any particular appointment, and on this special caution must be exercised, because some are in danger of interpreting friendly interest as a positive committal to a proposed course.

The bishop should not permit himself to be bound directly or indirectly by others, for, if he is not exceedingly careful, requests and expressed desires may be presented so as to draw out statements that afterward may have

a decidedly restrictive power over his own action.

He must not permit himself to be overawed by persons of powerful influence whose very position and presence may at certain junctures tend to consciously or unconsciously sweep away one's calm judgment.

Of all men, a bishop should not be a "respecter of persons," but should treat poor and rich, humble and prominent alike, and the desire of the humble and poor man should weigh just as much with him as the wish of the conspicuous and wealthy individual, and the poor church should receive just as much consideration as the rich church.

The bishop must guard against being coerced by individuals or by circumstances: for example, by conditions which are claimed to be peculiar or unusually difficult. Claims of this sort may be urged in such a way as to endanger the fair recognition of the claims of others, unless the appointing power is cool-headed and careful.

Of course, a bishop should not be intimidated by threats open or tacit. The bishop who yields to a threat is unworthy of his episcopate and is as responsible for breaking down the system as those who make the threats to which he yields.

A lay official has no right to say to the ap-

pointing power, as is reported to have been said: "If you do not send this minister for whom we ask, I will contribute no more money to the benevolences of the Church. I will not support the Church. I will leave the Church;" and a lay committee has no right to say: "If you do not send the man we want, we will close the church against any other preacher you send."

Laymen who say that are violating not only the law of the Church, but also their own solemn obligation to obey that law. Then to talk about locking the doors of the church against the regularly appointed pastor is absurd, for no board of trustees and no local church has any authority to do such a thing, and if it was attempted the civil courts would intervene and compel the opening of the church and the admission of the minister.

Such rebellion probably does not occur once in a thousand times, and then it is not as serious as it sounds, but it ought never to be tolerated, and under some circumstances a bishop would be justified in saying to such a threatening church member: "My brother, I am sorry to hear you speak as you have done and, particularly, to hear you threaten to leave the Church, but rather than the law of the Church should be broken and you violate your own solemn vows to observe the law, it will be

better for you to leave before the law is broken, and, though we regret your going, the Church can get along without you if you mean to continue in this spirit."

If a minister ever took the same attitude, he would deserve similar treatment.

Indeed, it would be better to lose a whole congregation rather than to have authority defied and the law of the Church persistently violated and despised.

However, before going to extremes, every proper effort should be made to reason the recalcitrant into a reasonable state of mind.

The legitimate claims of both ministers and churches must be considered, but that does not mean that the desires of one person or of several individuals should determine the appointment. There is no law for that, and it would be very unfortunate if assignments were made in that way. The wish of one man, or of several officials, is not the determining factor, but the fitness of the preacher and the equitable relations between other churches and other preachers. In other words, the need of the church and the merit of the minister are to determine the appointment, and the appointing power is legally set apart to hear, consider, and make the decision.

The primary thing is the need of the work. All the machinery of the Church exists to

further the work, and it is for the appointing power to ask: What kind of a man can do the work? Where is the man with the necessary fitness to do it?

Neither should a bishop be deterred from doing his conscientious duty through dread of what the dissatisfied may perchance do to him in the future.

Suppose he knew that laymen or ministers who failed to coerce him and make him do what was against his judgment and his conscience might malign him, and illegally attack him in some way: that should not be sufficient to prevent a brave bishop from doing his duty.

Some men may be capable of violating their vows and attempting to break down the system they solemnly obligated themselves to sustain, and of doing the un-Christly thing of injuring the officer who, in trying to keep his vows, has not done what they wanted or dictated, but these things should not frighten the bishop upon whom has been placed the responsibility of conscientiously making pastoral adjustments.

Even if it were possible for a bishop to be threatened before the meeting of the Conference, warned during the Conference work, and, after Conference, to be attacked for doing what the law, and justice, and the Conference demanded, even that should not move the

bishop from the discharge of his duty. If such things are even possible, then the system is in peril and the whole ecclesiasticism is in danger.

Of course, it should be impossible to have in the Church conditions that create even the shadow of a possibility that a bishop who acted in obedience to the law and gave a righteous administration should be injured by disappointed individuals who did not get what they wanted, or by ambitious manipulators who could not compel the bishop to aid them in their schemes, but, even if the bishop knew these things would occur, he should fearlessly perform his duty, and even if it costs him his ecclesiastical life. Otherwise he is not fit to be a bishop and the interests of the Church are not safe in his hands.

What encouragement is there for a preacher if the bishop is not allowed to help him when the bishop believes it is right to do so? And what encouragement is there for the average church if some strong church makes such insistent demands for itself, regardless of the weaker churches, as to practically prevent the appointing power from doing the equitable thing in some other direction?

Where is the legal system if, after the bishop has heard all parties who appeared before him or communicated with him, and has carefully

studied the cases, he is not permitted to exercise an untrammelled judgment?

What is the episcopacy worth if the bishop is not allowed to fix the appointments as the law requires him to do?

Where is the episcopal supervision of the work? Where if not in the assignment of the ministers?

Where is the general superintendency, or any other kind of superintendency, local or general, if the bishop must not do anything that has not been prearranged by some other party or parties?

Why should he abdicate and fail to do what the Church law commands him to do because a few unauthorized persons attempt to usurp the functions of the appointing power?

How long will the episcopacy, or appointing power, have any real value if the bishop, because he would not be coerced by one man or do the bidding of a petty political coterie, is to be persecuted in one way or another?

How long, if the Church does not vigorously sustain its episcopacy and rebuke the rebellious spirits who selfishly seek to dictate or destroy?

Nothing could be more dangerous than an episcopacy without courage, and it would be fatal to the denomination to have bishops who would dodge the difficult things. That a thing is

difficult and that the doing of the right thing will incur animosity and antagonism should not deter a bishop from the discharge of his duty. Better, indeed, would it be for him to die a martyr for his convictions and the maintenance of the law and welfare of the Church than to have an unrighteous popularity coming from those who unduly pressed him to do the weak and improper thing.

Under such conditions it behooves the loyal Church to rally to the support of its faithful officer, for the Church needs intelligent, considerate, and courageous officials. Without them the affairs of the denomination cannot be prosecuted successfully, and especially is this true in the case of its bishops.

The preachers need the help of the bishop, and the local churches need the support of the episcopacy and, sometimes, to defend them against some of their own class.

It is plain that if such inconsistencies were to become general and go on for some time they would ultimately break the system to pieces, and when the break-up came many others would be injured as well as the system and the minister.

We may say that few, if any, desire such deplorable results or are deliberately attempting to bring them about, but without such deliberation certain indicated conditions, if con-

tinued, would tend to disaster. The timely warning showing the need of caution may do more good than a belated attempt to put together a shattered system. The necessary thing always is to maintain the authority of the appointing power, for without this there is no final and disinterested arbiter able to decide between diverse interests in view of the rights of all concerned.

The bishop must be on his guard against the temptation to avoid meeting difficult things and to do the less difficult, for the easy thing may not be the right thing, and the popular move may, ecclesiastically speaking, be a vicious move.

To do the easy thing or, as they say, to pursue "the line of least resistance" may chance to be bad administration and, indeed, may be practical abdication. Some one has said, "'The line of least resistance' is a rut." Progress tries to avoid ruts.

To always give the local church what some of its members think it wants, rather than what it really needs, may seem easy and pleasant, or to send a preacher where he would like to go when he ought to go somewhere else, may prove to be very faulty administration and be ruinous in its results.

Simply to do what others want done may not be supervision at all, but, on the contrary,

may be a violation of the episcopal obligation to superintend the work, and the same principles apply to presiding elders in their sphere.

The duty of a bishop is not to be popular at all hazards, but to do what is right according to the light which he has.

The bishop must reserve up to the last moment the right to adjust and readjust the assignments according to the latest ray of light that comes to him.

The work of adjustment is not a thing of a moment and appointments cannot be made offhand. It is a continuing movement and a process of shifting and balancing until the fairest possible arrangement for every minister and every church has been discovered, and, therefore, the bishop must be allowed time for thought and for making the adjusting shifts up to the very end. Otherwise serious injustice may result.

Some are inclined to demand that while this process is going on they shall be told what the final outcome will be. This, indeed, would require prophetic gifts, to which even a bishop dare not lay claim. Some insist that they be told everything even before anything is decided, or can be decided. The bishop himself cannot know at the beginning, for if he could there would be no necessity for the days and

nights of hard work during the session of the Annual Conference.

As already suggested, the bishop cannot tell prior to the Conference what the appointments will be, and generally cannot tell definitely during the Conference, and, indeed, he may not be able to decide every case until the very end, for new information may be received and new shifts may have to be made up to the last moment just before he goes in to read the appointments on the eve of the adjournment of the Conference.

It would, therefore, be unsafe for a bishop to promise that people should know early what the appointments will be, for changes may have to be made toward the close of the twelfth hour, when there is no time for outside consultation, but when there is no need for such consultation because all the cases have been stated and investigated. For a bishop not to improve the list of adjustments at the last moment would be criminal and a serious wrong to all concerned, and, to repeat the old adage, "No appointment is made until the last one is made," and the making of the last one may disturb twenty adjustments that were supposed to be settled.

Some say every preacher should know where he is going before the appointments are read publicly. That, however, may be governed by

circumstances, and sometimes there is neither time nor opportunity just at the moment of the adjournment of the Conference, when the final adjustment has just been made, to tell any one, for the whole Conference, having finished its work, anxiously awaits the reading of the appointments.

Then, and not infrequently, it is at times better for the preacher not to know, and particularly when he is being promoted, or when he is going to a church that has been expecting another, for him to be able to say: "I knew nothing about my appointment until the bishop announced it in the list of the appointments read at the close of the Conference." That he did not know about his appointment may save the preacher from antagonism, turn resentment into sympathy, and change repulsion into a most cordial welcome.

It must be plain to every reasonable thinker who understands the method of making pastoral adjustments that the demand that preachers and people shall be told everything before the appointments are made and announced cannot be met by compliance therewith. In the very nature of things, to declare or promise particular appointments before they had matured would result in confusion and probable injustice to churches and min-

isters. It would tend to block better adjustments and might open some one to a charge of bad faith, for, after the telling, changes might be absolutely necessary and the final adjustment would not harmonize with the premature announcement.

The bishop should have before him all the facts prior to the final adjustment and statements as to facts may be presented from time to time up to the last moment, and these facts must be studied and their logical results considered, and the last ray of light the minute before the public announcement may compel readjustments. The bishop must have some moments for meditation before his final decision, and in these last moments there may be no time for further outside consultation, and, indeed, there ought to be no necessity for it, for all needed facts should have been, and are supposed to have been, presented prior to that. Outside consultation cannot go on for ever, and, at the last moment, with the Conference waiting and ready to adjourn, it would be unreasonable to demand further delay, particularly as everybody was supposed to know that all information should have been presented earlier.

Everything connected with the working of the itinerant system shows that the appoint-

ing power should be untrammelled and permitted to work with perfect freedom at all times, and when the appointments are made they should stand made until the legal and proper time for making changes.

THE PASTOR

THE pastor is the head of the church. That is quite universally conceded, though, it is to be feared, the concession is sometimes seemingly little more than a form. Some denominations induct or install their pastors with ritual, symbols, and declarations that give public recognition of the authority of the pastor as head of the church and shepherd of the flock.

Others do not employ ritualistic forms, but have it distinctly declared in the Church law and in the established usage.

In the itinerant and appointive system the announced appointment is the authorization, and the assigned pastor instantly is in authority and at once takes up his work in the new charge, as with the new appointment he instantly ceases to have authority in his former charge.

The ministers are the natural, Scriptural, and legal leaders of the Church. The salvation and progress of the Church depend mainly upon the ministry, and this statement

does not discount the laity, for the laymen have a most important place, but not exactly the same sphere which is accorded the ministry.

The minister is "the man of God," called of God, to preach the Word of God and to minister in sacred things, and the law of the Church gives him a standing different from that of the layman.

The pastor is not one of the local flock, but the shepherd of the flock. He goes before the flock as its leader. He is the conserver of what is good, the reformer of that which needs rectifying, the head that thinks and plans for the good of the congregation and the spiritual welfare of each individual therein. Hence, the pastor is to be recognized in form and in fact as the authoritative head of the church.

In the nature of things and for the prosperity of the Church, the ministry must be respected and protected. On the other hand, individual pastors should deserve respect and protection, and the ministry as a whole must measure up to the noblest standard.

To accomplish the most for himself and to do the best for his church, the preacher needs a fair field and a law-abiding, sympathetic, and supporting laity, and to be law-abiding and devoted himself; and he needs the backing of an

appointing power that is judicious, impartial, and courageous.

So the Church needs a ministry and a laity that will abide by and maintain the system of pastoral assignment, which should be a system in which political motives will have no place.

The minister has rights which he and all others should maintain.

First, that the contract between him and the Church, and between the preachers and the people, as to pastoral assignments shall be faithfully carried out by all the parties concerned.

Second, that he shall have fair representation and fair consideration in the making of the appointments.

Third, that he shall have equitable treatment by all concerned—by the bishop, by his advisers, by his brother ministers, and by church members.

Fourth, that the bishop shall be, and be permitted to be, such a bishop as the law meditates and requires, and shall be free to exert his moral and legal authority in meeting his most serious responsibility, and that he shall have courage to discharge his full duty in making the appointments, no matter what adverse influences are brought to bear.

Fifth, that all parties shall acquiesce in the outcome of the bishop's deliberations, and not

antagonize the appointed pastor or in any way persecute and punish the bishop for thus doing his duty according to the law and the intention of his office.

The key to the success of the church is the pastor, and he should be worthy of his position.

He should be consecrated to and earnest in his work. He should be self-respecting and independent, but not self-seeking. He should continually develop himself and make the best out of himself. He should be his best, do his best, and so deserve the best. He should resist every temptation to be sycophantic and cringing. While polite and respectful, he should be manly in his thinking, his speaking, and in his voting, and not demean himself with the hope of getting something to his personal advantage. As to officials, he should respect the office because of what it is and what it stands for, and respect the man in it for what he is in himself. The cringing minister without dignified and kindly independence is largely responsible for the disrespect with which the ministry is sometimes treated. He is an injury to his class and should be eliminated, suppressed, or transformed.

The minister in this system should not depend on the power of influential individuals for preferment. He should not depend on

church politics or ecclesiastical politicians. He should not expect to make progress by hanging on to the coat-tails of rich laymen or of clerical officials, but he should depend upon his own study and work for recognition and advancement.

The minister in this system should throw himself with earnestness and sustained vigour into the work assigned him, rather than to put his thought and soul into planning to get somewhere else at the earliest favourable moment. The system is of such a character that every preacher under it ought to be able to go on with his present work with scarcely a thought as to his next field of labour, confident that he will be justly provided for, and, with his mind freed from anxiety as to the future, he ought to be able to do better work and should have greater happiness.

The pastor should work faithfully at all times, and do his very best even under the most discouraging circumstances. As already suggested, he should deserve the best by making the best out of himself and by doing his best work wherever he may be, and then the minister should get the best he deserves, if it be possible in an equitable distribution which has regard to the rights of all.

To thus recognize and reward the pastors is to the interest of the laymen and the ap-

pointing power. Bishops and people should do all that is possible to see that each preacher is rewarded as he deserves, for this is calculated to insure the best service for the local church and to inure to the general benefit of the denomination. This suggests the need for a strong, intelligent, and fearless supervising and appointing power and of a broad-minded laity.

The true course for the preacher even under conditions that are not perfect, and when the working is not always and absolutely consistent, is to stand for the system, while at the same time he insists that it shall be worked fairly for all.

As for himself, the preacher should permit the system to work consistently and in harmony with the law. He should in no way interfere with its natural and proper operation. He should not interfere with the rights of his brother minister in any way, and he should not interfere with the equitable action of the appointing power in any case or in any way.

The minister should know the law of the Church, he should obey that law, and, in a judicious manner, he should teach the church to obey the law.

He should conform to the system and let it be known that all others are likewise expected to conform, and that even presiding elders and

bishops are expected to carry out both the spirit and the letter of the law of the Church in the matter of pastoral assignments.

The minister has a right to demand that he shall not be submitted to the cruel mercies of the " call "-method, which is unknown to the law of the Church, or be subjected to any call-method whatever, but that he be dealt with according to his merits, regardless of calls or no calls for himself or for others, for the call to another man should not injure him, or the call to himself should not stand in the way of the rights of another preacher.

The preacher has a right to demand that he shall not be injudiciously handled by officials, and particularly by presiding elders and bishops.

Preachers suffer from being canvassed too much. Often, indeed, they are canvassed to death. The way some have presented preachers for the consideration of the people, in view of possible appointments, looks very much like a concession to and encouragement of the call-method and a departure from the legal system.

Sometimes to offer ministers to churches is simply equivalent to asking the churches whether they will elect these men to be their pastors, when direct or indirect election is not meditated by the law, but is contrary thereto.

Certainly to offer preachers when the people are in certain moods is the surest way to ruin them, for at such times they are sure to be rejected, no matter how good they are.

For example, to name a preacher to people when they are insisting on the appointment of another man, is sure, in ninety-nine times out of a hundred, to result in an emphatic rejection, and such a rejection is likely to injure the reputation of the preacher ever after.

One of the old bishops used to say: "The bishop never should offer preachers to churches, for that is not his business. His work is to make appointments."

The minister should not always be the party to be squeezed and to feel the pinch.

If he is to go where he is sent, the other party to the contract must take the preacher who is sent.

If the request of a preacher for a particular place is not finally to determine the appointment, then the request of a particular church ought not to be regarded as finally decisive. On the other hand, if the church is permitted to ask for a particular preacher, then the preacher has an equal right to ask for a special church.

The minister, as one of the contracting parties, must have some right that will balance

that which is claimed by the other party to the agreement.

It may be said that the laymen pay the money, and, therefore, have a right to do these and other things, but the minister renders service which is equivalent, and sometimes more than an equivalent, to the money paid, so that at least the service of the one balances the pay of the other.

Then, if the payment of money carries with it certain rights, the service carries with it equivalent rights.

But there is nothing in law or equity, under the system, that entitles laymen to elect their pastors, any more than there is anything that empowers the preacher to select his place.

The pastor needs a fair financial support, and far more than the average preacher ever gets, but the minister must not be mercenary. He should not ask: "How much money can I get?" but, rather, "Where can I do the most good?"

As he expects the people to receive the appointed preacher, the pastor should take his appointment from the same authority.

Though it be unexpected, and a place he would not have selected, nevertheless he should accept it as a good soldier, regarding it as the place where duty calls. He should go to it

promptly, and, if possible, appear at the first gathering of the congregation. Promptness may forestall possible unpleasantness and make warm friends.

He should never show the shadow of disappointment or give any hint that the place was not what he expected, or that he felt it was not good enough for him. He should try to look upon it as a providential opportunity to do good and as having in it, though yet unrevealed, some real reward, even if the place is not such as he deserved.

He should go gladly, and show by his manner that he expects nothing less than a cordial welcome, and if he cheerfully shows that he expects and believes they will welcome him, that is the kind of a reception he is likely to receive.

One minister who was assigned to a charge that had not expected him was greeted, on the very day the appointment had been made, by a prominent layman of the local church, who said, in a tone of dissatisfaction, "You are not the man we asked for." To which the new pastor promptly replied: "Well, I am a Methodist minister, and I believe in going where the bishop appoints me. If you do not believe in that, you ought to leave the denomination."

The layman reflected and saw the logic of

the new preacher's remark and became his faithful supporter.

It seldom is necessary to make a reply like that, but a pastor may in a polite and considerate manner show that he knows his own place as pastor and that he knows the proper place of the members of the church, but he does not need to be aggressive in word or bearing. It is not necessary for him to apologize for going to his place or for knowing his place.

The pastor is not to be self-seeking, but self-sacrificing, ever ready to do his full duty as the shepherd of the flock. He is to be gentle, yet firm; intelligent and yet willing to learn; independent, but not overbearing; considerate, but not cringing; modest and yet fearless in the presence of power; outspoken against wrong and aggressively against the unworthy schemer and the political machinator, regardless of the effect it may have on his own promotion; and to be brave enough to be willing to suffer and to die for the right rather than to do or countenance the wrong.

Pastors of this courageous type can be leaders in their churches, for they will have the confidence of the laity, and such pastors, standing together in denominational matters, can mould the entire body ecclesiastic.

XX

CONCLUSION

THE itinerant and appointive system of pastoral supply is no experiment. For long generations in the Old World as well as in the New it has been tested with equally favourable results under all conditions. Scores of thousands of ministers are at this moment subject to it, and millions of church members are voluntarily submissive to it, and the almost unanimous loyalty to it is one of the marvels of modern times.

The widespread adherence to the system by the tens of thousands of ministers and the millions of members is because it has demonstrated its capability to accomplish what it proposes to do in furnishing ministers with pastoral charges and supplying local churches with ministers, so that, while under other systems large numbers of churches are without pastors and hosts of preachers are without places, the itinerant appointive system keeps the churches supplied with pastors and insures pastoral charges for its ministers.

It has shown that it is a remarkably good system and one that is good for all. Under it the churches are better cared for and the preachers are more fully provided with places.

The itinerant-appointive system can do this because of its mechanism, which is constructed to work from a centre, the influence of which extends to all. It is a method of pastoral assignment under a supreme appointing power, which by the fundamental law of the Church, and the mutual consent of preachers and people, has final authority in determining who shall be the pastor of the charge and to what church the minister shall go.

This supreme power is constantly supervising and superintending the ministers and the churches far and wide, and so has a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of places and preachers, and, hence, is competent to give intelligent judgment in regard to preachers and places, and, being disinterested, can be impartial. In addition this appointing power receives information and is open to suggestions from many sources.

After having been tested for about one hundred and seventy-five years, in which it has given very general satisfaction, it now is used by various denominations having about fifty thousand ministers and from eight to nine millions of communicant members, to say noth-

ing of the millions of adherents, and these millions are overwhelmingly in favour of the itinerant and appointive method of pastoral supply.

Nevertheless, as in every organization, there are a few who do not enjoy being under any restraint and would like to take the matter of arrangement into their own hands, though the law denies them the right and has lodged the power elsewhere.

Their actions interfere in some degree with the free operation of the ecclesiastical mechanism and tend to the destruction of the machinery. This tendency to mar the method is infectious, and, unless checked, may spread, and particularly among a younger generation which has not been well trained according to the traditions of the fathers.

The system must be managed strictly in order that it do justly to all concerned. As the Episcopal Address of 1912, already quoted, well says:

"No system which involves the rights and destinies of men can endure unless conceived in justice and administered with equity. To its last demand does this principle apply to constitutional government. More inexorably still is impartial administration essential in a constitutional system created by voluntary mutual covenants, individually assumed in a

spirit of self-renunciation for the advancement of a sacred cause."

The same address raises the following questions:

"1. Can the Itinerancy continue unless equitably applied to all who owe it allegiance?

"2. Can the appointing power hold the confidence of preachers and churches unless absolutely impartial in its administration?"

The answer to the first query is: No, the principles of the itinerancy must be equitably applied to all who are under it, both preachers and people, and the gratification of one church must not be at the sacrifice of other churches, or of one minister at the sacrifice of other ministers, or of the people at the sacrifice of the ministry.

The answer to the second question is likewise a negative and of the most emphatic character. The appointing power cannot hold the confidence of preachers and churches unless it is absolutely impartial in its administration. To be partial would not only cause loss of confidence, but, more than that, would surely result in its own destruction. The Church trusts the appointing power because it believes in its impartiality, but let the Church become convinced that the appointing power is not administering for the good of the whole Church,

but has become a respecter of persons and bows to the behest of the rich and influential, because they are wealthy and possessed of influence, then the appointing power itself is doomed, or the individuals in the appointing power will by due process of law be swept from their positions. For a little while the designing and influential may make trouble for the bishop who does not yield to their demands; but when the Church comprehends the situation it will rise in its might and demand that the appointing power shall always be impartial, no matter what may be the opposing influences; and when a bishop does his duty according to law and equity, it will demand that he be sustained by all.

The only way the appointing power can retain the confidence of preachers and churches is to be absolutely impartial in its administration, and that is the only way it can avert its own destruction.

But there are other points to be guarded against besides the action of the appointing power. For example, what should be said of those who bring undue pressure upon the appointing power?

What about those who undertake to dictate appointments and who threaten dire disasters if they do not get what they demand?

Such things practically interfere with the

impartial working of the system and tend to injustice in many directions.

What is to be said about people who, because they did not get the preacher they picked out, give the new pastor a chilling reception and in some way punish him for coming to the place to which he had been duly appointed according to the law of the Church?

What about the presiding elder who asks the people, "Do you want your preacher back next year?" and perhaps writes individual letters to officials asking such a question, thus keeping people and preachers stirred up and tempting some to ask for a change, whereas if nothing of the sort was said there would be continued satisfaction. And where does the presiding elder find law to justify the course, resorted to by some, of encouraging the people to practically elect their pastor each year, or to dissolve the relation existing between pastor and people, and thus to humiliate the pastor who entered the system supposing that both preacher and people had nothing of the kind to do, but left it to the appointing power? A presiding elder can learn what is the situation in many other ways.

And what would be thought of a presiding elder who set aside the balances and equities between all the pastors and all the churches and was dominated by the demands of a few

influential persons and went before the bishop to urge him to do these particular things? Such things would not help the system to work equitably and impartially.

The itinerant system exists to be worked equitably under an impartial administration, but both preachers and people must see to it that they do nothing that tends to prevent such absolutely fair working. Preachers and people must not interfere with the system or coerce the supreme authority, but must permit the appointing power to work freely and administer with absolute impartiality, and the whole Church should sustain the independent action of the appointing power.

There is a proper way of making wishes known to the appointing power which may not injure any one, and is welcomed by the Church authorities.

The greatest harm is in the local church claiming as a right the decision as to whom the pastor shall be, and in resenting the appointment if it is not what the church had prearranged, and following this with the ill-treatment of the legally appointed minister, not that they had anything against him, but because he is not the preacher the people had asked for.

If the people would merely request or suggest, and then acquiesce in the assignment

when it was not what they wanted, there might be little harm; but to crucify the regularly appointed pastor is not only a violation of obligations, but it is un-Christian and should never be tolerated.

There have been some instances in which lay officials have incited the people to rebellion because they did not get "their man," but for a bishop to yield to demands made under such circumstances would be to discount himself and to destroy the system.

To have a Conference after a Conference is over might logically require another and another Conference, and so on indefinitely.

The time to present suggestions and to study appointments is while the Conference is in session. Then comes the time for decision, then the public announcement of the assigments, and then the end.

When appointments have been made, they should stay made until the next regular time for change, unless in a case of health and humanity which had not been known. Because a preacher or a church wanted something else is not sufficient reason for a change, and particularly one that would compel the overturning of other most satisfactory appointments. If the announced assignments were not to stand, preachers could not be sure of what churches they were pastors, and

churches could not tell who were really their ministers.

Plainly, the only fair thing to do is to work the system according to its intention. Otherwise, there must be chaos, and with the selections of pastors by the laymen the ministers must be sacrificed or run the risk of being sacrificed.

By all means, let the people express their desires, and, equally, let the preacher present his wishes, while the bishop sympathetically listens, but then let the appointing power intelligently, conscientiously, and courageously make the assignments that the needs of the work and the merits of the men demand. The bishop is to superintend, but there is no superintending by the bishop if he does not make the appointments on such equitable principles.

The only honest way of administering is in strict conformity to the system itself, and the only honourable thing on the part of people and preachers is likewise to conform.

If preachers care little as to what injustice may be done their brethren in the ministry, so long as they get a promotion; if laymen care little, or not at all, as to the fate of other churches, or of the ministry generally, so long as they get what they demand; and if the appointing power cares more to please a few in-

fluential persons, lay or clerical, than that absolute justice shall be done all the churches, and throughout the entire body of the ministry—the result must be loss of confidence and the breaking down of the system. But if, on the other hand, all classes observe the equities, the system will work smoothly and be a blessing to the entire Church.

These equities may extend beyond the individual minister and the individual church. Thus, where the ministers are grouped in separate bodies, as, for example, Annual Conferences, care must be exercised in making transfers of ministers from one Conference into another.

As there are equities between individual ministers, so there are also equities between the bodies in the several Conferences, and between these a balance must be preserved. Otherwise it would be possible, by transferring preachers, to make a surplus in one Conference, so as to crowd the Conference with too many ministers for the places, and to crush men already in the overcrowded Conference, and, particularly, would this be the case if the men thus transferred were put in the best charges, thus keeping down the preachers who deserved promotion.

Again, as to vacancies, ministers in a Conference claim that they have a right to the

benefit of the providential vacancies created by death, retirement, or withdrawals, in order that they may have reward of an equitable movement upward, and, generally speaking, all other things being equal, this should be regarded as a righteous claim.

One simple principle, namely, to transfer no minister in, unless there is an equitable transfer out, is calculated to preserve the balance and to protect all concerned.

For a bishop to fix the appointments is simply to do what he was elected for, and what the law commands him to do, and he would be amenable if he did not do it.

When a bishop has invited and sought the needed information, and then, in the fear of God and for the welfare of the entire denomination, makes the appointments, or any particular appointment, he has not done any autocratic, arbitrary, or imperialistic act, but simply has done his duty and, hence, does not need to apologize, even if he has not done what some individual demanded; and, when he has thus done his duty, the whole Church should sustain him, for he has merely done what the Church has ordered him to do. Not to sustain him would be a crime against its own law and an injustice to the individuals involved.

This system which has given marked success to the various denominations that have

used it can continue to give them success, and will be sure to do so if it is properly maintained.

So valuable is it that all should unite to resist weakening and destructive tendencies whenever and wherever they appear, and the system is worth preserving even if it costs the loss of a congregation or a preacher who will not abide by its requirements, or, on the other hand, the loss of a presiding elder's popularity or the martyrdom of a bishop who stands in its defence.

This, however, should not be and need not be, if the Church will be true to itself; and, if the bishops and the presiding elders will steadily stand together and administer the system consistently according to the law, the evil tendencies can be eradicated in a very short time.

In the maintenance of the system the laity should be interested, for they need certainty in the supply of pastors, and the ministers need it to insure them continuous pastoral employment, and there is no other system equal to it for taking care of both pastors and churches.

Properly worked, it tends to create and sustain a manly ministry with an unbroken spirit, because the pastor does not have to beg for a place or curry favour to continue in a church,

as back of him stands the appointing power, and the minister having more at stake than any other individual in the system has a right to expect that it will be so operated that his equitable rights shall be fully respected.

The Church needs a manly, well-qualified, and consecrated ministry that serves not for money or to gratify earthly ambition, but which labours to save humanity; and, when the Church is just in its treatment of each individual minister under this system, then there will be a ministry with spirit and power, and a Church with success.

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